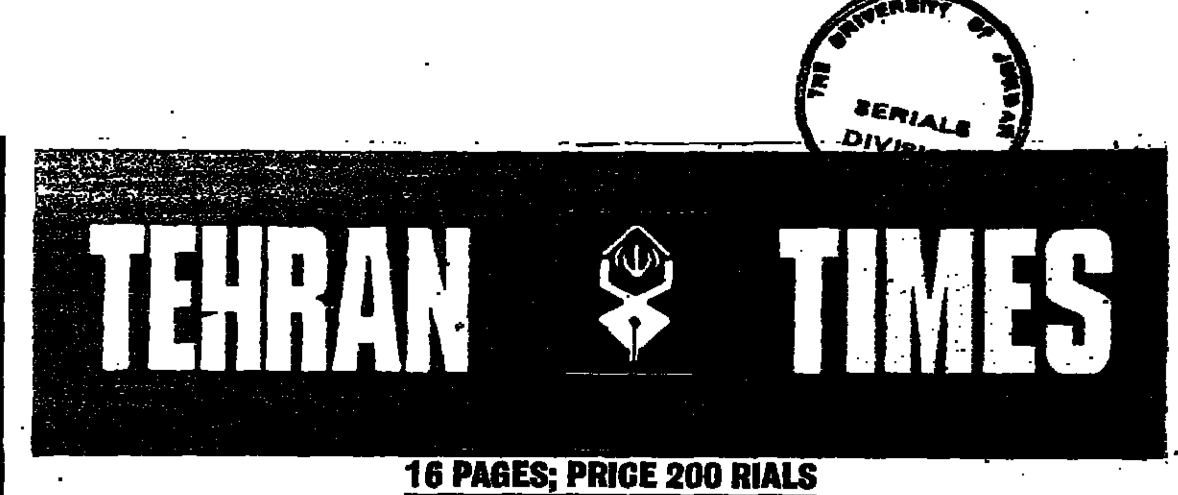
China Warns Washington Over Visa for Taiwan Vice-President

BEIJING — China Tuesday hit out at the United States saying its decision to grant a transit visa to Taiwan Vice President Lian Chan could have serious consequences for bilateral ties.

"The true objective of Taiwanese political figures when they travel through American territory is to create two Chinas," Foreign Ministry spokesman Shen Guofang said.

(Contd on Pg. 14)



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Iraq Warns Turkey Against Miscalculating Over Its Incursion

BAGHDAD — Iraq said Tuesday it was losing patience with Turkey over its hot pursuit of Kurdish separatists in northern Iraqi territory and warned Ankara against making a serious miscalculation.

"It's not possible for Iraqis to show more patience and stand idly by indefinitely as Turkish military forces pursue their incursion," the official Al-Iraq newspaper said.

(Contd on Pg. 14)

Al-Khalil Deal Stalled by Two-Year Gap Over Withdrawal Timetable

BAIT-UL-MOQADDAS — An agreement on Israel's withdrawal from Al-Khalil has been blocked by Israeli demands that further troop redeployments from the West Bank be delayed for nearly two years, Israeli media reports said on Tuesday.

U.S. mediator Dennis Ross met throughout the night with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in a bid to find a compromise timetable for the transfer of most West Bank rural areas to Palestinian rule as required under the Oslo peace accords, Israel radio reported.

Several Israeli newspapers revealed Tuesday that Netanyahu, in talks Sunday with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, said he did not want to complete an already agreed three-phase pullback of troops on the West Bank until May 1999, 20 months later than required under the Oslo accords.

Arafat insisted the withdrawals be completed according to the Oslo timetable by September 1997 and has refused to sign an already drafted agreement on the transfer of power in Al-Khalil over the issue, the press reports said.

Netanyahu spokesman David Bar-Illan told AFP that Israel offered to commit itself to carrying out the first phase of the redeployment in March or April, but rejected the September deadline for the other two withdrawals.

Once the full redeployment has been carried out, Arafat's Palestinian Authority would control up to 85 percent of the West Bank, compared to only three percent now.

Ross, who met with Arafat Monday evening as part of an intensive two-week-old mediation effort, has reportedly proposed a vaguely worded compromise that would set the final pullback date somewhere in between September of this year and May 1999.

Israel radio said a new Netanyahu-Arafat meeting could be held to try to resolve the dispute and sign an agreement on handing Al-Khalil over to Palestinian rule, a move already nine months behind schedule.

Under the 1995 interim agreement on Palestinian Autonomy signed by Israel's previous Labor government, the Zionist state was to withdraw its troops from seven main West Bank towns between November 1995 and March last year, ending with Al-Khalil.

Dimming hopes for a quick Israeli-Palestinian agreement on bringing self-rule to Al-Khalil, Palestinian officials on Tuesday rejected Israeli demands for a nearly two-year delay in the timetable for further troop withdrawals on the occupied West Bank.

The officials said the refusal by Israel's right-wing government to withdraw its troops from most of the West Bank by September as required under previously signed agreements was blocking a deal to transfer power in Al-Khalil, the last of the territory's big towns under occupation.

"We reject this completely," said Marwan Kanafani, spokesman for the Palestinian negotiators, of the proposed withdrawal delay.

Jordanian Prime Minister Abdel Karim Kabariti urged Israel Tuesday to sign the long-delayed agreement with the Palestinians on an Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank flashpoint town of Al-Khalil.

"We hope all the obstacles (to the deal) will be lifted and that the current crisis will dissipate," Kabariti told Oman's Cabinet Affairs Minister Fahd ibn Mahmud al-Said, the official Omani news agency reported.

Kabariti said Jordan determined that there were "many negative signs from the Israeli side and we have deployed our efforts with the help of other Arab countries to try to save the peace process."

Oman last month froze steps toward normalizing ties with Israel and recalled its trade delegate from Tel Aviv for consultations in protest at the hardline policies of the new Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu.

Muscat opened the trade office

(Contd on Pg.14)



Serbian Military Leaders Ready to Use Army Against Milosevic

KINKEL: MILOSEVIC LIKELY TO STAY IN CHARGE

LONDON — Officers and elite units in the Yugoslav Army are ready to rebel against President Slobodan Milosevic if he orders a crackdown to end weeks of opposition protests, a press report said here Tuesday.

"If Milosevic orders a crackdown, I would be prepared to shoot him," a major — who was not named — in charge of a tank brigade told the *Independent*.

The report came a day after student leaders in Belgrade said they had won guarantees from army commanders that they will not crush the daily demonstrations against the Serbian government.

The paper said sources in the armed forces had told it that roughly half their permanent members, as well as the vast majority of conscripts, are sympathetic to the demonstrators and would do everything they could to avert bloodshed and political repression.

Another major, in what the *Independent* said was an elite regiment, said that if Milosevic "tries to use the army, the army will be used against him."

The major added that action by the police force — which observers believe would be at the forefront of any crackdown — would meet with strong army resistance.

"First we would issue a warning and then, if necessary, we would take stronger action," he told the daily.

The major also said his brigade had sent a letter to the armed forces chief of staff, Momcilo Perisic, asking whether they might be ordered to move against the demonstrators and making clear they would strongly oppose such an order.

Perisic, the major said, had replied that the army's job was to protect the constitution and that he gave a specific commitment that it would not take part in repressive activities.

With his letter, he reportedly enclosed a copy of a report by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe calling for the reinstatement of opposition victories in disputed local elections that were held in November.

On Monday, more than 200,000 opposition supporters defied a police ban on protest marches, turning daily demonstrations against Milosevic into a huge

(Contd on Pg.14)

Israel, Hezbollah Clash as Truce Committee Resumes Meeting

NAQURA, Lebanon — Israeli troops and Hezbollah exchanged fire in southern Lebanon on Tuesday as a truce monitoring committee resumed a meeting to discuss complaints of cease-fire violations.

Hezbollah fired mortars at Israeli positions and those of the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA) mercenaries in Sujud and Shuwayya in Israel's self-declared "security zone" in South Lebanon, security sources said.

(Contd on Pg.14)



NAQURA, Lebanon (Jan. 6): Lebanese and Syrian representatives from the five-nation — France, the United States, Syria, Lebanon and Israel — international committee monitoring a truce in South Lebanon arrive at the headquarters of the UN peacekeeping forces in the town of Naqura at the Lebanese-Israeli border to discuss complaints by Israel and Lebanon of violations of the accord. The committee will resume its meeting on Jan. 7.

(AFP PHOTO)

Qatar Willing to Forgive 'Outrage' Caused by Bahrain

DOHA — Qatar is willing to forgive the "outrage" caused by Bahrain over their territorial dispute as the two head to a Persian Gulf Arab meeting on Tuesday aimed at defusing tensions, a newspaper said.

Foreign ministers from Qatar and Bahrain were due to join their counterparts from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman and the United Arab Emirates later Tuesday in the Saudi capital Riyadh.

"Qatar is willing to adopt a stand of openness toward Manama and forgive the outrage caused by some (officials) in Bahrain," *Al-Raya* said.

(Contd on Pg.14)

(See pages 2 & 3)

Police and Activists Clash Near Algerian Massacre Site

DOUAOUDA, Algeria — Security forces and activists clashed Tuesday near a town where 18 people were killed by activists, an AFP journalist saw.

At least two activists were wounded in the shooting which occurred when activists tried to return to Douaouda, where 18 civilians were massacred Monday.

Activists killed 18 people and wounded another 18 in the seaside town of Douaouda, 30 kilometers (18 miles) west of Algiers.

Witnesses of the Douaouda atrocity said more than 100 activists took part in the attack, which targeted a working class area known as the city of olives on the edge of the town, using knives, guns and explosives.

Shocked villagers said a six-month-old baby was among the victims. Two other children, aged six and eight, and several women, were also killed. (AFP)

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In the Name of God

They disputed with you about the truth after it had become clear, (and they went forth) as if they were being driven to death while they saw (it).

(HOLY QORAN) (8:6)

OPINION

Edifice of Middle East Peace Crumbling to Dust

Several years of negotiations on the withdrawal of the Zionist troops from the West Bank city of Al-Khalil (Hebron) have proven of no avail because Israelis have now come up with a new demand that their troop redeployment from that city be put off for some two years.

Under the Oslo accord, Israel should have withdrawn its troops from 85 percent of Al-Khalil and handed over the city's municipality to the Palestinian Authority (PA) by March 1995.

There are about 120,000 Palestinians in the city, which has only 400 Jewish settlers. Besides, the Palestinian Authority has agreed that the Israeli soldiers remain in the enclaves where the Jewish settlers live. Despite all this, the Zionist state is not ready to abide by the commitments it has already made.

(Contd on Pg. 14)

Austrian Ambassador: Vienna Willing to Expand Ties With Iran

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — In a meeting with Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati, here Monday, the new Austrian ambassador to Tehran voiced his country's willingness in promotion of bilateral relations with Iran.

The Austrian diplomat, Helmut Verner Eriq, also called for enhancement of relations between Iran and the European Union (EU), an IRNA report said.

Eriq, submitting a copy of his credentials to foreign minister said that Iran was a key state in the region and in the world scene in terms of its geographical location, high potentials, principled policies as well as its spiritual and cultural influence and role.

He said that Tehran-Vienna relations and cooperation should be expanded in accordance with mutual interests. Cultural cooperation between Iran and Austria would pave the ground for mutual understanding, he added.

The Austrian diplomat said that convention of Tehran-Vienna Joint Economic Commission session in Tehran and of Islam-Christianity Conference in Vienna were among main factors being effective in bilateral ties.

Velayati for his part underlined the strong will of Tehran and Vienna in further strengthening their ties.

He said there was an ample opportunity for promoting mutual cooperation in view of the existence of common grounds.

New Ambassador to Kenya Appointed

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Mohammad Kazem Hassani Tabatabaei was named here Tuesday as the new ambassador of Iran to Nairobi.

According to IRNA, the appointment was proposed by Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati and approved by President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.

Tabatabaei has already served as Iran's charge d'affaires to Baghdad and Muscat as well as deputy to the first and second Persian Gulf Department at the Foreign Ministry.

Taleban Launch Activities to Undermine Iran's Border Security

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The insurgent Taleban group has launched a series of activities at the border areas which poses a threat to the security of the Islamic Repulic of Iran.

Local sources from the eastern province of Sistan-Baluchestan reported that the Taleban recently took into custody a group of wealthy Iranians residing in eastern border areas and mistreated them.

The sources believe that the Taleban did so because of their hostile attitude towards the Islamic Republic of Iran.

According to other reports from Nimrouz and Fora provinces of Afghanistan, during the recent weeks the Taleban group has moved those broder residents who have friendly relations with Iran to the central parts of Afghanistan, replacing them with *Pashto* families who are trusted by the Taleban.

Through taking such measures, the insurgent Taleban group intends to station its mercenaries along the Iran-Afghanistan border so as to be able to unleash its plots aimed at undermining the security of the Islamic Republic in the border regions more easily, the report added.

The American daily *New York Times* wrote last week that Taleban are fostered by the U.S. to oppose the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Iran Calls Formation of Bosnian Federal Government 'Positive'

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The Islamic Republic of Iran regards formation of Bosnian Assembly and the vote of confidence cast by Bosnian representatives in favor of the federative government as a positive step towards cohesion of the republic, an IRNA report said.

Iranian Ambassador to Sarajevo Mohammad Ebrahim Taherian told IRNA in Sarajevo Monday that formation of a federative government was taken by Iranian officials as a positive development made to bring about cohesion in Bosnia and remove enemies of the government.

The Bosnian Parliament in its first session, convened on Friday after September elections, had given vote of confidence to Bosnian government and its designated Cabinet.

Taherian said that Bosnian federative government owed its formation to the struggles by Bosnian people and Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic.

He added that the event carried the message of Bosnian people to Western countries, calling on them to abide by their obligations towards peace.

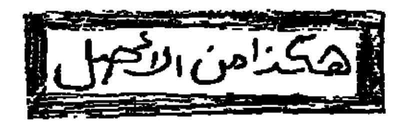
He concluded that Iran would spare no efforts to expand and deepen its ties with Bosnia and contribute to its reconstruction.

Ambassador Calls On Rulers of Sharjah, Ras al-Kheimah

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — Newly-appointed Ambassador of Iran to the United Arab Emirates Hossein Sadeqi held separate talks with rulers of Sharjah and Ras al-Kheimah on Tuesday.

In the meeting with Sheikh Sultan bin Muhammad al-Qasimi, the ruler of Sharjah, the two officials pointed to common interests and historical bonds between Iran and Sharjah, emphasizing the need to broaden and bolster relations and cooperation between Iran and the UAE.



Gold Province of Kerman, Gold Land of Iran

New Experiences in Trade and Industry

Mr. Morteza Bank, Kerman Province governor general

Hojjatoleslam Seyed Yahya Ja'fari, representative of Vali-e Faqih and Friday prayer leader of Kerman took part in an interview to elaborate on the important role the newly found Kerman Province Development Investment Company can play in the development of the region. He said: It is an obligation to all the Muslims and responsible authorities of the Islamic government and the public to do their best to participate actively in the construction activities of the country. Doing so, will solve many problems of the Islamic society.

Hojjatoleslam Ja'fari said the investment company can meet the targeted objectives of the responsible authorities for the province. The creation of an investment company in the region with the goal of development can have positive effects on the social development of the region in the long run.

Referring to the fact that the responsible officials of the investment company are required to entrust the stock subscribers, the Hojjatoleslam said: If the people are not optimistic toward the company, it cannot be successful. Establishment of such a giant company should be based on feasibility studies and consultation with the experts in the field, or else it will be a great loss for the investors and founders.

The representative of Vali-e Faqih stressed the participation of the pious and determined workers in top capacities of the company and said the company should be rooted deep from the very beginning of its establishment. The Friday prayer leader of Kerman asked for the participation of the wealthy strata of the society in the establishment of the Kerman Province Development Investment Company and added the rich should not be indifferent toward these issues.

He said, nowadays, there is a lot of capital in the hands of people who do not know how to use it. It is better for them to transfer their capital to those who can use if for development purposes. This will return millions more if they think economically. He added: If one is a Muslim and if he perceives the realities of his society, he should put forth his money and facilities for construction and production ends to remove obstacles in the way of the youth. "We hope provincial authorities establish the investment company relying on the consultations and feasibility studies with enough care in order to promote economic conditions of the region, thus take a step toward the development of the province.

Finally he wished success for the founders and investors of the company to take further steps toward economic growth in the province. Also at a gathering of industry owners and industrialists, Morteza Bank the Kerman Province governor general, elaborated on the objectives behind the establishment of the Kerman Province Development Investment Company and the ways the public can participate in construction, industrial and agricultural plans.

The governor general of the province said: Creation of the Kerman Province Development Investment Company paved the way for the public and capital holders as well as owners of the productive units to participate in the economic activities in Kerman Province.

Mr. Morteza Bank referred to the construction era of the country and said: Iran is now passing through a sensitive period of construction and development and it needs public participation in the economic and social fields more than ever. All the public in productive, public service, and industrial units are required to invest in Kerman Province Development Company in order to participate actively in the development of the province and creation of job opportunities.

At a gathering of industry owners, industrialists, experts and producers, the governor general of Kerman Province said: Regarding the investments made by the government in the infrastructure plans in the province and the existence of the ready fields for the investment, Kerman Province Development Investment Company can take giant steps toward blossoming the economy of the province by attracting and leading the public capitals to the development fields. Outlining the potentialities of the province, Mr. Bank said: At present the Islamic government, according to its new objectives and policies, tries to accelerate economic growth by public assets.

He went on to say: Since the end of the eight-year imposed war, huge investments have been made on the part of the government on infrastructure plans of the country including creation of railways, development of power transmission lines, petrochemistry, oil industry, airports, etc. He added: Utilization of these huge capitals by the government has stabilized cash in the hands of the public and brought about , more or less, inflation in the country. He said the huge public capital is not in conformity with the rate of investment in the country. Therefore, it causes economic recession in the country.

During the past four years, utilizing different methods and with the aim of curbing inflation, the government has met new horizons by collecting and funnelling public assets in investment companies. Fortunately the public's trust has enabled the Islamic government to take giant steps in the field.

Referring to the activities of the investment companies in national and provincial levels, the governor general said: Enjoying a special status, as well as capabilities and potentialities, the establishment of the investment company in the province is necessary. And elaborating on the number of industrial units in the province, Bank said: At present, there are some 15,000 small and big industrial units in the province, 1,100 of which are giant units manned by over 11,000 employees who can be stockholders of their companies in future.

He hoped the managers of these industrial units purchase the company's shares and encourage their employees to do so. In the same gathering, Dr. Arman, director for economic studies of the Tehran Stock Market said: The establishment of an investment company in Kerman Province has long been focus of attention for decision-makers. In case the company attracts Rls. 100,000,000,000 for its capital in Kerman Province, we will have one of the largest development investment companies ever created in the region.

He added: Indeed, nowadays the culture of stockholding has rooted deep in the life of people in all industrial and advanced countries of the world. For instance, in 1995, Japan, enjoyed over $80,000,000,000 trade surplus, as compared with other countries. It stood third in development sector, thus issued some $1,032,000,000,000 stock bonds. Dr. Arman expressed regret that in Iran, due to the petrodollars, and vastness of the banking system, marketable securities have not been paid much attention. According to Arman, international laws require economic systems of the advanced countries to provide over half of the required capital for the new investments through issuing stock bonds, etc.



Mr. Eskandarizadeh, deputy governor general in economic affairs

He revealed in S. Korea, over 78 percent of the financial resources for the new investments is provided by stock bonds; and in Turkey which enjoys a similar economic structure as Iran, in 1995, some $27.5 stocks and securities had been sold.

In spite of the fact that last year we sold the largest portion of stocks, the highest rate of stock sale is below $1,000,000,000. In advanced countries stock sale provides at least one-fourth of the capital needed for new investments, wheres in Iran last year the rate of stock sale was something about 4 percent. That is to say, in 1995, only four percent of the capital needed for new investments was fulfilled by stock sales. However, Dr. Arman pictured bright future for the field because of the fact that people have come to know the importance of stockholding.

He said: At the moment the country cannot rely fully on governmental resources and it faces limitations in the field. In other words, the government possesses special national resources and it cannot meet the requirements of the current all-field economic growth. On the other hand, the government cannot rely totally on the banking system because it causes hidden inflation.

Elsewhere Dr. Arman said: Fortunately regional investment companies can well meet the investment needs of the provinces in particular and the society in general, to keep them up-to-date in the unending endeavors toward economic development of the country. It is a matter of great pleasure that these investment companies have all been extremely welcomed by the public and capital holders.

He said the first regional investment company, established during the current year, was Khouzestan Development Investment Company which attracting little capitals of the public could pave the way for economic activities of over 30,000 investors or stock-holders.

Furthermore, two other investment companies in Isfahan could attract Rls. 58,000,000,000 in the first phase paid by over 40,000 investors, and Rls. 75,000,000,000 in the second. According to Dr. Arman, in West Azarbaijan Province, too, over 90,000 people invested in regional development investment companies and paid some Rls. 50,000,000,000 to help economic development plans in the province.

On the status of the regional investment companies in national arena he said: In Sept.-Oct. (Mehr, 1375) of the current year, some Rls. 612,000,000,000 has been purchased by the public in four stock sales. In the same stock selling, Iran Industrial Development Investment Company received 352,000,000,000 rials from 240,000 stock buyers across the country.

On the capital development company in Kerman Province, he said in order to achieve the goals of the company all the people should have serious participation in the purchase of the shares.

"We can accordingly benefit from the ensuing investment in commissioning of many units which are currently suffering from lack of financial resources.

He added that the capital development company in Kerman province is in fact one of the biggest regional companies in the country with very good support unique in

Kerman Province Development Investment Company

the country. He said the people should rest assured that their investment will bring them good benefits in the future.

In continuation of the session, Eng. Eskandarizadeh, the deputy of the governor general in charge of economic affairs said one point



Seyed Hossein Mar'ashi, Majlis (Parliament) member of Kerman

should be underlined here and that is to create a national and provincial atmosphere so that this important move would take shape in the province's economic scene.

He added that fortunately capital market has taken shape in the country as of two years ago, playing a part in provision of liquidity in the country's industrial units.

Eskandarizadeh further said that last year a number of manufacturing and industrial companies in the country have been able to absorb 128 billion rials of liquidity through the country's stock exchange.

This move has been successful in absorbing the people's participation and providing suitable capital to be used for completion of many projects.

He added that Kerman Province is the first province in the country presenting such a plan of these companies. The governor general's deputy said the articles of association of this company was drawn up last year.

He added that the capital investment company of Kerman Province is the first company among other provinces selling its shares at national scale.

He expressed hope that with the presence of strong share-holders in this company, the people will take serious participation in purchase of its papers.

Elsewhere in his speech, Eskandarizadeh evaluated the situation of the province's important manufacturing units, which are mostly among the founders of the capital investment company, as very significant and described the car-manufacturing company as a successful experience in the country.

He stated that this unit has not so far used a single penny from government capital, adding that it has made 50 billion rials investment in the region from its incomes.

Eskandarizadeh added that this car-manufacturing company has given a flip to assembly work in such a way that every hour the company presents an assembled vehicle to the market. He said the company's painting room will become operational next year.

The governor general's deputy called this car-manufacturing unit as the founder of an encompassing industry in one of the farthest regions in the country: Bam.

He added that the Bam's car-manufacturing industry will create 2500 new jobs in the region in the not-too-disitant future.

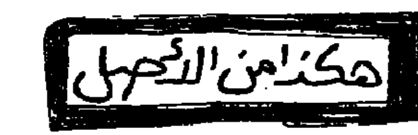
Elaborating on the construction situation of other manufacturing and industrial units in the province, Eskandarizadeh called the Sirjan special economic region as an important factor contributing to export-import and said so far over 70 percent of the region's lands have been sold to the traders and proprietors of industries across the country.

He added that at present 101 industrial units are active in the region and that 70,000 tons of goods have so far unloaded in this region through Bandar Abbas railway track, with a portion of the goods distributed across the country. The official said that reason rules that all people including the proprietors of industries, artisans and the masses of people should seriously participate in the Province's capital investment company, preparing the necessary ground for commissioning of similar manufacturing and industrial units.

Eskandarizadeh went on to say that the sale of the company's stock papers will begin as of 15 Day continuing for 12 days in all the branches of Mellat Bank across the country and in all the banks in the Kerman province.

He said people can remit their sums to the account number 88888 and purchase their share for 1000 rials for each share.

Present at the session were he director generals of the Kerman Province's industries and mines departments. The participants raised questions which were answered by the experts of the company.



Iran to Repay $1.641 bn of Foreign Debts Next Year

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The special commission for dealing with next Iranian year's budget bill endorsed the repayment of some $1.641 billion dollars of the country's foreign debts by the government next year (March 20, 1997- March 20, 1998).

A member of the commission, Reza Abdollahi, making the above statement, added that, according to a decision made by the commission, the government's executive organs are bound to conduct foreign transactions and conclude contracts through competitive tendering, if they are over one million dollars in value.

"If the country earns foreign currency more than what is expected now, the extra amount will be added to the foreign currency reserve or used in repaying the foreign loans," Abdollahi said.

He cited the allocation of some 80 billion rials for buying or constructing houses for the war-disabled veterans as among other decisions made by the commission. Also, it was decided that the villages, located at a 15-kilometer distance from the natural-gas network, should be connected to the network next year through making a 20-percent contribution, the commissioner noted.

President Stressed Need for Preservation of Water Resources

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN -- President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani underlined the need for planinng to protect the country's water resources.

Addressing a applied economic science gathering on Tuesday, president Rafansjnai added that water economy has today turned into a universal matter, stressing the need for a suitable planinng for supply of sufficient water for the future of the country.

He said that initiation of dam construction is a unique move in the country, noting that there are 130 dams completed or under construction.

The president expressed regret over unprincipled use of water in some regions in the country and pointed out that water is an invalublc and vital capital which should not be used extravagantly.



Iran's Oil Price Rises to $22.5 Per Barrel

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The average price of Iran's crude oil went as high as $22.5 per barrel, said the director of National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC) department of international affairs, Hojjatollah Ghanimi-Fard, in an interview with the Persian-language daily Iran.

He added that, due to the rise in the price of oil, Iran's oil revenues during the past nine months were some 22.3 percent more than the approved budget for the current Iranian year (March 20, 1996-March 20, 1997), the increase in the oil earnings exceeding this year's budget by $2.67 billion.

Concerning the price of oil next year, Ghanimi-Fard noted that, given Iraq's return to the international oil market and the possible decline in the oil consumption next spring, the trend of rise in the oil price is unlikely to continue. He cited the severe cold in Europe and America as a reason for the oil price hike.

The survey shows that the average price of Iran's crude oil in the similar period last year was $18 per barrel, which indicates that the average price of oil has increased by $4.5 this year compared with last year.

Tehran-Almaty Joint Economic Commission to Meet Next Month

ALMATY — Kazakhstan voiced readiness to host the 3rd session of Tehran-Almaty joint economic commission on February 14, Kazakh deputy foreign minister Vyaecheslav Gizzatov said on Tuesday.

Gizzatov who has recently been appointed as Kazakh ambassador to Tehran, in a meeting with Iranian ambassador to Almaty Hassan Qashqavi also discussed the practical ways of implementing 40 agreements concluded between the two countries.

The two official promised to do their best for making up the session as fruitful as possible.

The volume of trade between Iran and Kazakhstan reached $ 100 million in 1996, $ 30 million more than in 1995. *(IRNA)*

$60 Million Worth of Commodities Exported From E. Azarbaijan

TABRIZ, East Azarbaijan Prov — Some $ 60 million worth of non-oil products have been exported from this northwestern province of Iran in the first nine months of the current year (started March 21, 1996), director general of the provincial trade department Mohammad-Hussein Allafi, said here on Monday.

According to the official, the figure is expected to rise to $ 100 million by the year-end, saying that over $120 million worth of goods were exported from the customs here last year.

He put the value of the goods exported to newly independent states of Central Asia during the past nine months at $156 million, adding that the exported commodities mainly included iron wares, aluminium scraps, iron bars and industrial machinery.

Allafi said that during the period, $1. 5 million worth o commodities have been exported tc Armenia and Nakichevan througl border markets of Norduz and Jolf while importing the same amou of goods from these two countrie *(IRNA)*

Russian Nuclear Energy Minister:

Number of Russian Engineers in Bushehr Plant to Rise to 1,000

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The Russian Ministry of Nuclear Energy once more reiterated Russia's seriousness in its decision to continue cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran in the nuclear field.

The Russian Nuclear Energy Minister, Victor Mikhailov, in an interview with the Interfax News Agency announced yesterday that 200 Russian engineers are presently working at the Bushehr nuclear power plant, but, he added, the number will soon rise to 1,000.

The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) also reported that Russia is determined to continue its nuclear cooperation with Iran, China, India, and Cuba.

The Interfax quoted Mikhailov as saying, "The export of nuclear technology and radioactive materials from Russia increased by $200 million in value in 1996, earning a total of $2.2 billion."

Meanwhile, the Russian Nuclear Energy Ministry Spokesman, Georky Kaodov, told the BBC that his country is determined to go on with its nuclear cooperation with Iran. "The only remaining problem is the procedural bottleneeks in repayment of Iran's debts to Russia," he said, expressing hope that the problem would be solved in the near future.

He noted that a high-ranking Iranian delegation will visit Moscow at the invitation of the Russian nuclear energy minister in the near future. The two sides will hold talks over the repayment of Iran's debts, Kaodov added.

Chinese IUA Deputy Confers with Majlis Budget, Planning Commission Chairman

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN -- Chinese Deputy for International Understanding Association, Joliang, conferred with the Majlis Chairman of Budget and Planning Commission, Hojjatoleslam Dorri Najafavadi here yesterday.

Joliang described relations between Iran and China as good and called for expansion of mutual cooperation, especially in parliamentary areas.

The Chinese IUA deputy stressed that China will not allow any country to hamper the expansion of Tehran-Beijing relations.

Hojjatoleslam Dorri Najafabadi alluded to the common cultural grounds between the two countries and called for expansion of mutual cooperation in all areas.

Judiciary Chief Arrives in Yazd

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN -- Iran's Judiciary Chief, Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi, arrived in Yazd on Tuesday morning and was welcomed by a representative of the *Velayat-e-Faqih* (Supreme Muslim Jurisprudent), the city's Friday prayer leader, the governor-general and judicial officials of the province.

On his arrival at the city, Ayatollah Yazdi told reporters that his visit is aimed at surveying judicial issues and meeting with the people and officials of the province.

During his two-day visit, Ayatollah Yazdi will inaugurate the Office of Women's Affairs, the newly opened data base of Abarkoh and the start of construction of the Justice Department building of Mehriz.

Ayatollah Yazdi in this trip is accompanied by the justice minister, the executive deputy of the Judiciary, the head of the Organization of Prisons and a number of judicial officials.

Azeri FM Underlines Tehran-Baku Cordial Ties

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The Azeri Foreign Minister Hassan Hassanov, in Baku Sunday, touched on the cordial relations between his country and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Hassanov made the remark in a ceremony held for installation of equipment for the operation room of a hospital in Azeri city of Masali. The equipment has been donated by Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati.

Adressing the hospital personnel, the Azeri minister thanked Iran for assisting Azerbaijan under the country's tough condition, IRNA reported.

Iranian Ambassador to Baku Ali Reza Bigdeli, aslo present at the ceremony, expressed hope that the operation room would be inaugurated soon.

Fallahian: Investment on Younger Generation Disappoints Enemies

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN -- Information Minister, Hojjatoleslam Fallahian, said that cultural awarness of the younger generation disappoints the enemies of the Islamic Revolution.

The minister added that the people of Iran have been present in all the events and that their prescnce has thwarted all the enemy plots.

Iranian Qoran Reciters to Compete in 35 Countries

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN -- In anticipation of this year's observance of the holy month of Ramadan, the Organizatione of Culture and Islamic Relations will dispatch 90 reciters of the Holy Qoran to 35 countries.

The official in charge of supervising the departure of the group told IRNA yesterday that the recitors will travel to European, Asian and South American countries upon an invitation by the host country.

The official added that the recitation programs where the Iranian reciters will be participating in will be screened on television by these countries.

Last year some 57 Iranian recitors were dispatched to 25 countries for the same purpose.

Velayati Arrives in Rome

ROME — Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati arrived here on Tuesday on an official two-day visit at the invitation of his Italian counterpart La Beto Dini.

Velayati, accompanied by Foreign Ministry Spokesman Mahmoud Mohammadi and director general for Euro-American Affairs Department, is to hold talks with Dini and Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi as well as Vatican Secretary of State Angelo Sodano.

Dini in a meeting with Velayati in New York in October invited him to pay an official visit to Rome.

Italy has been for all-out expansion of ties with Iran over the past two years despite continued pressures exerted on it by the United States. *(IRNA)*

More Than 100,000 Hides Exported From Central Province

Arak, Central Prov — Some 104,223 pieces of pickled rawhide have been exported from this central province of Iran this year (started March 21, 1996), director general of the provincial department of standard and industrial research Ahmad Zakeri said here on Monday. *(IRNA)*

Indian Daily: Iranian Women Enjoy Equal Rights With Men

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — A leading Indian national daily, *Qaumi Awaz* said that equal social and constitutional rigths with men have been provided to women after the victory of the Islamic Revolution led by the late Imam Khomeini.

Since in Islam both men and women enjoy equal rights and importance, Iran also provides opportunities to its women for taking part in the development scheme within the country and abroad, the daily wrote in its article, 'Iranian Women are Progressing'.

Discarding the influence of Western culture in which women are being exploited and considered as a useful commodity in the name of freedom, the Iranian women by Islamic way of life are becoming the guiding example for the women all over th world, says the article.

According to Imam Khomini, Hazrat Fatima (SA) is a tn and best example of a perfe Muslim woman. At the sam time, she was both a perfe woman and a perfect human being, says the article.

The article says the Imam ha also accepted and announced th at the time of Islamic Revolution, the Iranian women hav placed the best example of struggle, sacrifice, bravery, strengt and cooperation and their role i the revolution would be remembered.

During the past three decades participation of women in the development programs are being considered at the internationa level, concludes the article.

Law Enforcement Forces Statement on Observing Ramazan

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN -- The Law Enforcement Forces division in Tehran, in a statement faxed to the *Tehran Times* yesterday, felicitated the Grand Leader of the Islamic Revolution and the devoted Iranian Muslim nation on the approach of the holy fasting month of Ramazan (Jan. 11-Feb. 8, 1997).

The statement also underlined that, during Ramazan, eating and drinking in the public from dawn until dusk, the time of fasting, is against the law and that the restuarants, fast-food shops, tea-shops and the like are not permitted receive customers in the above p riod.

"All hotels and inns that p pare food for travelers staying w them are not allowed to sell fo stuff to other custormers," added.

It also said that holding part in public places during the nig when Muslims stay awake, pr ing in vigil, is forbidden. The sta ment concluded by noting that action in violation of Islamic ru and customs is considered an fence and the violators will prosecuted.





FOOTBALL

Wilkinson FA's Technical Director

LONDON: Howard Wilkinson, sacked after eight years with Leeds United in September, has accepted the job as the English Football Association's new technical director.

The 53-year-old will oversee the development of talent at football's grass-roots level.

The FA wanted a professional for this newly-created role and Wilkinson fits the bill with 35 years experience as player, coach and manager.

MP Enters Red Card Row

BOLOGNA: An Italian MP here called for referee Marcello Nicchi to be suspended after he sent off Bologna's Swedish ACE Kennet Andersson for asking to be substituted.

The row started in Sunday's match at Vicenza, where Andersson came in for some nasty treatment at the hands of the Vicenza defense.

Andersson had already been booked when, after yet another foul on him, he asked his coach to be substituted. Nicchi felt slighted and promptly sent him off.

But Bologna MP Filippo Berselli, a member of the right-wing National Alliance, decribed the referee's behavior as "incredible" and said he should be suspended immediately.

CRICKET

South Africa Win Series

CAPE TOWN: South Africa won the second test and the three-test series against India here with a crushing 282-run victory at Newlands inside an hour after lunch on the final day.

Hansie Cronje's side set up the unbeatable 2-0 lead in the rubber through some aggressive bowling, brilliant fielding and determined batting, the best of which came in the first innings where the home side declared on 529 for eight.

Fuelled by half centuries from Hudson, Daryll Cullinan and an unbeaten 59 from Mcmillan, South Africa declared again on 254 for seven to leave India the task of scoring 427.

Resuming at 52 for three overnight, India conceded with the score on 144 for nine with Javagal Srinath ill and unable to come to the crease.

RACING

Carson to Retire

LONDON: Four-times Derby winner Willie Carson will make this flat racing season his last.

The 54-year-old Scot will ride current favorite Bahhare in the 2000 guineas and will then take stock of his future.

Carson has been out of action since an accident at Newbury last September when he was kicked in the paddock and spent almost two weeks in hospital with severe liver injuries.

His wife Elaine confirmed the news of his impending retirement. Carson is the fourth most successful jockey in British flat racing history with over 3,500 winners and five champion jockey titles.

He won the Derby four times, the last on Erhaab at the age of 51.

ALPINE SKIING

Sykora Botches up Treble

KRANJSKA GORA: Thomas Sykora notched up his third win in Slalom racing this season when he dared all to win a controversial men's world cup race here.

He beat Frenchman Sebastien Amiez and fellow Austrian Thomas Stangassinger for his first win at Kranjska Gora, and the first by an Austrian in 13 years.

But Italy's Alberto Tomba, who has been in the first three here five times, finished eighth and sparked controversy by saying the race should never have been held given foggy conditions.

"This race was against the rules," fumed the world and Olympic champion.

"With this fog, no-one should have gone down — you couldn't even see the next gate."

AUTO

Shinozuka Leads the Way

NARA: Japan's Kenziro Shinozuka in a Mitsubishi and Stephane Perterhansel on a Yamaha won the third stage of the Dakar rally raid following a 592km run from Kayes to Nara.

Shinozuka and French co-driver Henri Magne came home in 6hrs 28min 37sec, almost four minutes ahead of French pair Jean-Louis Schlesser and Philippe Monnet in a seat.

In the motorbikes category, Peterhansel crossed the line in 6hrs 43min 47sec just a second ahead of Spain's Jordi Arcarons on a KTM.

RUGBY LEAGUE

Third Aussie for Tigers

CASTLEFORD: Castleford Tigers have snapped up Australian second rower Jason Udden from Canterbury Bulldogs on a one-year contract.

The 27-year-old former western suburbs player is Castleford's third recent Australian signing, following the arrival of stand-off Adrian Vowles and Prop Sean Mcvean.

SKIJUMP

Peterka Takes Four Hills

BISCHOFSHOFEN: Slovenia's Primoz Peterka won the four hills skijump event beating Austria's Andreas Goldberger into second place following the final leg here won by Dieter Thoma of Germany.

Seles Pulls Out of Australian Open

MELBOURNE, Australia - Defending champion Monica Seles has withdrawn from the Australian open starting next week, organizers said Tuesday.

Representatives of the four-time champion contacted open tournament director Paul Mcnamee informing him that x-rays had revealed that the world number two's right ring finger was broken in two places.

Seles fractured her finger between the tip and the knuckle while warming up for an exhibition tournament last month and has not played since December 4.

Her U.S.-based publicist issued a statement saying the results of x-rays taken on the injured finger on Friday eliminated any hope of her playing the open.

Seles said in a statement: "I want so much to return to Australia, where I have so many happy memories and good friends.

"All I can do is look forward to 1998 with great anticipation."

Seles boasts an unblemished record of 28 wins at the Australian open, having also won the championship in 1991, 1992 and 1993 before missing the event the ensuing two years after being stabbed during a tournament in Hamburg in April 1993.

Her absence follows the decision of former champion Andre Agassi to miss the event citing lack of motivation. (AFP)



CHICAGO,Il, United States (January 6): Michael Jordan (C) of the Chicago Bulls tries to drive past Jeff Hornacek of the Utah Jazz (L) during the second half of their game at the United Center in Chicago, Illinois. The Bulls won the game 102-89. (AFP PHOTO)

U.S.Cup Fights Latam Club Event

LOS ANGELES - A battle between the United States Soccer Federation and organizers of an eight-team event here involving Latin American clubs might wind up being settled in court.

The USSF objected to the Los Angeles Coliseum Cup being conducted here because its own U.S. Cup — a tournament featuring Denmark, Peru, Mexico and the U.S. team — is scheduled in nearby Venues later this month.

Under pressure from the USSF, the Mexican Football Federation revoked permission for its clubs to play in the event. Such permission was needed under FIFA rules to allow the club teams to play in the U.S. event.

Organizers said they had spent $100,000 to promote the event, which might have to be reduced to an exhibition if sanctions are upheld.

The Coliseum Cup is scheduled sporadically over several months with the finals set in May. But USSF officials feared fans might confuse it with the U.S. Cup.

As a result of the controversy, opening round matches Sunday at the 100,000-seat Coliseum were played without spectators being allowed to view the competition. (AFP)

Brazilian Coach Vows Discipline and Direction

EAST RUTHERFORD, New Jersey - Carlos Alberto Parreira, who guided Brazil to the 1994 world cup title, vowed to stress discipline and organization with his new team, the Metrostars of major league soccer.

Parreira, 53, has signed a two-year contract last week to become the third coach of the New York-New Jersey club within its first nine months.

"The coach of the World Cup Champion is expected to produce miracles.": Parreira said. "I am considered a disciplinarian. The players have to have the desire to win. If they don't want to be professional, they are not welcome."

Parreira replaces Carlos Queiroz, the former Portuguese national coach who took over from Eddie Firmani after a 3-5 start last season. Queiroz left after the season to coach Nagoya Grampas eight of Japan's J-league.

Italian midfielder Roberto Donadoni will organize Parreira's lineup but the Metrostars will be without American forward Tab Ramos until June or July after surgery to repair his left knee.

Pakistan Bowl Out Australia for 120 Gripping Win

HOBART, Australia - Pakistan, defending a meagre 149 runs, skittled Australia for 120 off 41.3 overs to win their one-day triangular series cricket match by 29 runs here Tuesday.

On a minefield pitch only 269 runs for 20 wickets were scored with Rookie Mohammad Wasim's 54 standing out as a beacon after Pakistan had lost their top three batsmen for ducks.

Australia found scoring 150 at three an over beyond them and extras top scored for them with 28 while Michael Bevan was ninth man out for 24 off 81 balls in a painstaking 141 minutes.

It was Australia's fourth consecutive one-day loss and placed them in danger of missing out on this month's finals for 17 seasons being two points behind the West Indies and Pakistan on the standings.

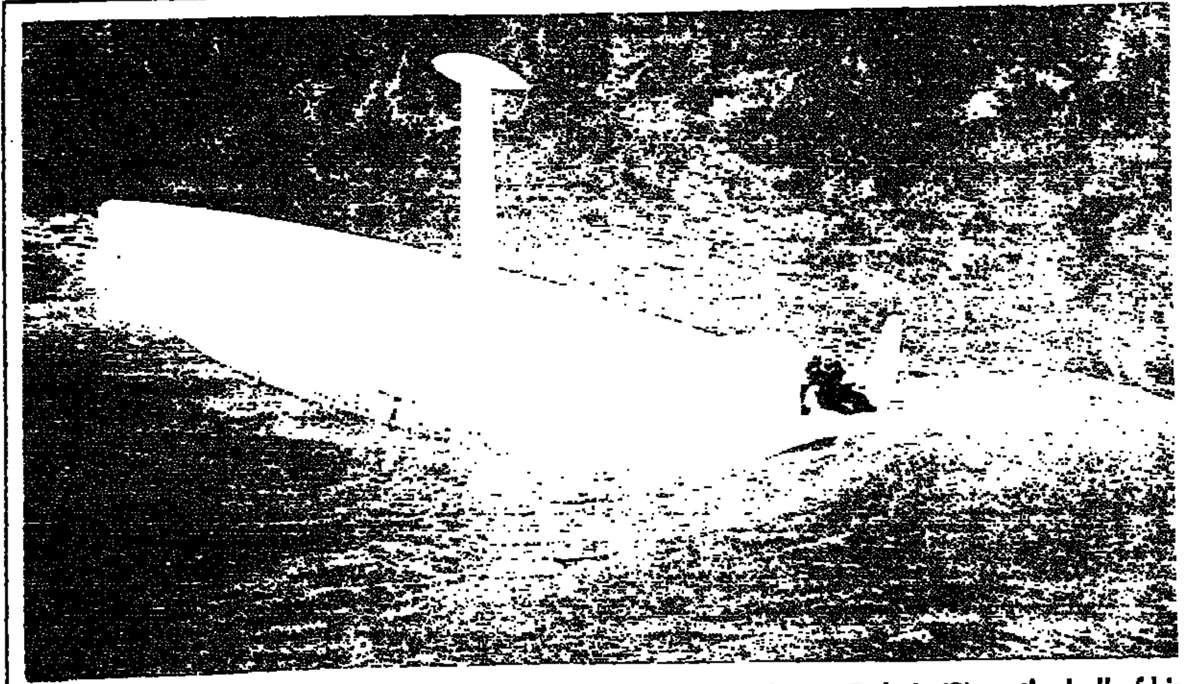
Kansas Loses Some of Its Lead

NEW YORK - Kansas' first tight game of the season and Wake Forest's impressive wins over ranked teams combined to bring the teams the closest they have been in the six weeks they have held the top two spots in the college basketball poll.

The Jayhawks (13-0) were still the runaway No. 1 choice Monday, but the 62-59 victory over Kansas state, their first game this season decided by less than seven points, cost them five first-place votes.

Those in the national media panel who switched opted for Wake Forest (10-0), which beat then-No. 7 Utah 70-59 and then-No. 11 North Carolina 81-57 last week. Kansas received 59 first-place votes and 1,739 points, while the Demon Deacons had 11 No. 1 votes and 1,685 points.

Kentucky, Iowa State, Clemson and Cincinnati held third through sixth, while Arizona, Villanova, Utah and Duke rounded out the top ten. Minnesota and Xavier, Ohio led the second ten with their highest rankings of the season and in Xavier's case, its highest ranking in 38 years. (AP)



SOUTHERN OCEAN, Australia (January 6): French yachtsman Thierry Dubois (R) on the hull of his upturned yacht Amnesty International in the storm lashed South Ocean. Dubois had been clinging to the hull for almost 24 hours, unable during earlier attempts to secure a life raft dropped by an Australian air crew. (AFP PHOTO)



KABUL, Afghanistan (Jan. 6): An Afghan demolitions expert belonging to the British-based Halo Trust carries two unexploded miniature bombs which he collected from the grounds of the American Embassy in Kabul. Up to 150 of these lethal bomblets -- not all of which explode on impact -- are packed inside the body of a 250-kilogram cluster bomb, four of which were dropped on the Afghan capital during a raid by anti-Taleban jets the day before.

(AFP PHOTO)

Red Cross Carry 46 Dead Soldiers Across Frontlines

KABUL -- The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) carried the bodies of 46 opposition soldiers killed by the Taleban across the frontlines Tuesday, according to official sources.

"All the bodies were wrapped in ICRC blankets and the transfer was made without any conditions," Red Cross spokesman Jean-Luc Paladini told journalists.

The anti-Taleban soldiers were killed in recent fighting north of the Afghan capital during two successful offensives by the fundamentalist militia.

"It is a gesture of goodwill by the Taleban," Mullah Khairullah Khair Khwa, governor of Kabul, told journalists.

A six-vehicle Red Cross convoy collected 31 anti-Taleban dead fighters near the northwestern city exit and another 15 bodies at an ICRC first-aid clinic further north early Tuesday morning.

With the permission of the Taleban authorities in Kabul the Red Cross drove across the frontlines near Qarabagh district center 45 kilometers (28 miles) north of the capital to the other side.

"The bodies were handed over to the security chief of Charikar," said Paladini.

Charikar, located about 20 kilometers (12 miles) north of Qarabagh, is the provincial capital of Parwan Province, and the forward base of the anti-Taleban alliance.

When the Taleban overran Kabul September 27, last year the Rabbani forces under President Burhanuddin Rabbani's strongman Ahmad Shah Masood joined forces with the northern warlord General Abdul Rashid Dostam and the Shia religious faction leader Karim Khalili.

(AFP)

(Contd from Pg. 2)

OPINION ...

It is clear that the Zionists' new decision is another stumbling-block to a peaceful settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian crisis. And the Palestinian Authority is surely wise enough to realize that the edifice of the so-called Mideast peace process is crumbling to dust.

A quick glance at what the Palestinian Authority has failed to achieve, and thus has fallen short of attaining statehood, will do to make the Palestinian leaders realize that the PA has been created merely in order to promote and safeguard the interests of the Zionist regime in the areas nominally ruled by the Palestinian Authority. As a matter of fact, the Palestinian self-rule council has been barred from exercising power in the following areas, which are integral parts of an state: defense, foreign policy, banking, finance, visa and passport, and the like.

Therefore, if the Palestinian leaders are content with what they have obtained so far and have given up claims to their other rights, they are by no means true representatives of the Palestinian people.

With the recent Israeli decision, the onus is on the Arab states which claim to vindicate the rights of the Palestinian nation to take a proper stand on the issue. Any procrastination and inaction will surely undermine the Palestinians' position in the face of the expansionist Zionist entity.

Qadhafi, Farrakhan Meet

TRIPOLI -- Libyan leader Moamer Qadhafi held talks here Monday with U.S. black Muslim leader Louis Farrakhan on Islam, Afro-Americans, and their influence on the next presidential election. Libyan state television said.

They discussed "matters that affect Islam and Muslims around the world as well as freedoms," the television said.

Farrakhan briefed Colonel Qadhafi on "the situation of blacks in America and the influence they would have during the next presidential election," it added.

He had told Tripoli previously that his Nation of Islam organization "was ready to create a new political force in the United States to defend the plundered rights of the blacks and other minorities" and to play an effective role in U.S. politics.

(AFP)

(Contd from Pg. 1)

AL-KHALIL...

In Bait-ul-Moqaddas, the Israeli media said an agreement on Israel's withdrawal from Al-Khalil has been blocked by Israeli demands that further troop redeployments from the West Bank be delayed for nearly two years.

Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat insisted the withdrawals be completed according to the Oslo timetable by September 1997 and has refused to sign an already drafted agreement on the transfer of power in Al-Khalil over the issue, the press reports said.

in August 1996 under a deal with the previous Israeli Labor government of Prime Minister Shimon Peres. (AFP)

(Contd from Pg. 1)

CHINA...

These activities could "damage" Sino-U.S. ties, he added.

Shen was reacting to the decision by the U.S. State Department to grant a transit visa for Lian so that he can spend one night in Los Angeles on Tuesday on his return for the investiture of Nicaraguan President Arnoldo Aleman.

He called on Washington to ensure that Taiwanese politicians "cannot take advantage of their passage through American territory to take part in activities designed to create 'two Chinas'."

"We have already explained our position on this to the United States which has promised to deal with these situations on the basis of the one China principle," Shen added.

He said Sino-U.S. ties were improving with an exchange of visits planned for this year and next between presidents Jiang Zemin and Bill Clinton.

"We have more common ground than differences," Shen said of current relations, adding the main difference was over Taiwan.

Last week China protested the presence of Taiwan's foreign minister at the signing of Guatemala peace accords.

At a closed-door United Nations Council meeting, without specifically mentioning Taiwan the Chinese delegation "regretted" the development at the December 29 signing ceremony, saying it constituted "an attack on the sovereignty of a UN member state."

China, which replaced Taiwan at the United Nations in 1971, is strongly opposed to efforts by Taiwan to seek independent recognition. Beijing considers the nationalist island to be a renegade province.

China is holding up plans for a UN military observer force for Guatemala in protest against the Central American country's long-standing diplomatic ties with Taipei, which sent Foreign Minister John Chang to Guatemala City.

China staged a series of military exercises off the Taiwan coast in 1995 after reacting furiously to a visit to the United States in June of that year by Taiwan President Lee Teng-Hui.

That trip was interpreted by Beijing as an attempt by Taiwan to promote its independence -- two Chinas -- a status which China has repeatedly warned would warrant an invasion.

The nationalists formed a government in Taiwan after they were defeated in a civil war with the Chinese communists in 1949.

After years of diplomatic tussles with China, Taiwan's diplomatic allies have been reduced to 30, including South Africa which has decided to switch recognition to Beijing from the beginning of 1998.

Beijing has warned other countries against forging ties with Taiwan.

(AFP)

(Contd from Pg. 1)

IRAQ...

"We hope the Turks revise their political and military stand to avoid making a bad miscalculation which could seriously harm Turkey's unity and the future of its people," said the newspaper for Iraqi Kurds loyal to Baghdad.

Al-Iraq said Ankara's Iraq policy "is not in the interest of the neighboring Turkish people, but serves the odious American plot aimed at preventing Baghdad from resuming control of Iraqi Kurdistan."

Last month Turkey launched an air and ground offensive against the Turkish Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) in Iraqi areas near the border. Turkish officials said last week that 72 guerrillas had been killed.

Iraq's official *Al-Jumhuriyah* daily said the "U.S. and British silence toward Turkey's dangerous acts in the north reflect the Washington-London-Ankara axis aims which threaten Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity."

It said the "violation of Iraqi territory by the Turkish Army raises doubts about the intentions of Ankara, which calls for a lifting of the embargo imposed on Baghdad, and proves Turkey's submission to Washington to plot against Iraq." (AFP)

(Contd from Pg. 1)

QATAR...

The two sides have disagreed over the aims of Tuesday's meeting.

A Bahraini official said "all questions" would be debated including the dispute over the Hawar islands, while a Qatari official said the meeting would focus on "clearing up the air" rather than the dispute itself.

The meeting was scheduled for Monday but was postponed because Qatar's Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad ibn Jassem al-Thani, was accompanying the Emir Sheikh Hamad ibn Khalifa al-Thani, on a visit to Britain, Qatari sources said.

Qatar has been locked in a decades-old dispute with Bahrain over the Hawar islands, sandbanks and reefs which are under Bahraini control. Bahrain also claims the Zubara region off the northern Qatari coast.

Qatar has presented the case to the International Court of Justice at The Hague. Bahrain, which wants the dispute to be resolved within the PGCC, reluctantly presented its own case to the International Court in September.

Qatar says it is ready to withdraw the case if Saudi mediation leads to a solution.

Bahrain boycotted the PGCC summit in Qatar in December to protest the Qatari stand.

Relations took a turn for the worse last month when Bahrain sentenced two Qataris convicted of espionage to three years in prison and when a Bahraini helicopter pilot reportedly defected to Qatar.

(AFP)

(Contd from Pg. 1)

SERBIAN...

Orthodox Christmas procession.

This was the 49th straight day of protests against the annulment of the opposition victories in the local elections.

Meanwhile, German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel on Tuesday reiterated calls for President Slobodan Milosevic to recognize opposition victories, but said it was incorrect to assume the Serbian leader would be ousted.

It would be "false to think that Milosevic will not be there for much longer," Kinkel said as opposition protests in Serbia following the cancellation of November election results entered their eighth week.

Kinkel reiterated that Milosevic "must recognize the result of all the elections won by the opposion."

However, he said "this will not be enough and I am not sure that it is possible to put the clock back," adding that the situation was "uncertain, not very sure."

Regarding Germany's stance, Kinkel said there "could be no question of massive support for the opposition."

He also ruled out trade sanctions against Belgrade, saying they would penalize the general public.

However, he said, no European Union economic aid was currently being sent to Serbia.

Kinkel argued that Milosevic is "interested in German aid," all the more because a large part of the country's infrastructure has been built by Germany. (AFP)

(Contd from Pg. 1)

ISRAEL...

The mortar barrage triggered retaliatory shelling by Israeli troops of the Iqlim al-Tuffah, east of the town of Sidon, they said.

There were no reports of casualties or damage.

The duel came as the truce committee resumed a meeting begun on Monday to discuss complaints filed by Lebanon and Israel over alleged violations of the cease-fire accord, sources close to the Lebanese delegation said.

The committee -- comprising French, American, Syrian, Lebanese and Israeli representatives -- convened at 10:30 a.m. (0830 GMT) at the headquarters of UN peacekeeping forces in the town of Naqura at the Lebanese-Israeli border.

The panel had met Monday for a six-hour session during which Lebanon added a new complaint to its list of grievances.

The Lebanese complaint over Israeli shelling of Ain Qana in the Iqlim brought to five the number of cases to be discussed at the meeting.

Lebanon had earlier filed complaints over Israeli shelling of the village of Baraasheet on December 19 in which two civilians were wounded and an Israeli air raid on Lowaizeh on January 3.

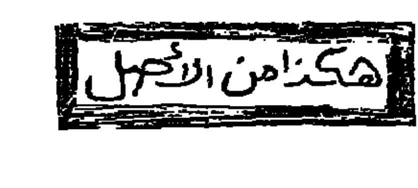
Israel lodged complaints over a December 19 attack by Hezbollah that wounded Israeli General Elie Amitai and December 24 roadside bombings carried out by the group which killed two Israeli soldiers.

The committee, currently chaired by France, was formed to monitor the April 26 truce agreement which ended Israel's 17-day Grapes of Wrath onslaught into Lebanon last year that left around 175 people dead; mainly civilians.

The U.S.-brokered truce bans both sides from attacking or carrying out attacks from civilian areas.

The panel has already met eight times to hear complaints from Israel and Lebanon. Although it cannot impose sanctions, the committee aims to encourage the two sides to talk. Israel's peace talks with both Lebanon and Syria remain stalled.

(AFP)



U.S. Grapples With Immunity of 'Law-Breaking' Diplomats

WASHINGTON — The United States prepared Monday to seek a lifting of the immunity of a Georgian diplomat involved in a fatal car accident as it weighed the fate of two other diplomats from Russia and Belarus who have been in trouble with the New York police.

Officials said the administration will ask Tbilisi to allow the prosecution in the United States of Georgy Makharadze, the number two envoy here from Georgia who reportedly caused the car accident in which a 16-year-old woman died.

The crash followed a separate and less serious incident in New York last month in which a Russian and a Belarussian diplomat were detained by police over a parking ticket that led to a scuffle and charges of police brutality from Moscow.

The State Department said Monday it is awaiting police reports and, in the case of the Georgian diplomat, a decision from the attorney general on whether to press criminal charges. That decision was expected yesterday.

But the alleged misconduct here of the dignitaries has received much attention and prompted State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns to reassert the principles guiding international conventions on foreign envoys.

"All diplomats living and serving in the United States, whether they're accredited to the United Nations in New York or the United States government in Washington, all have a legal obligation to respect local laws, to respect city laws," Burns said.

"I think we've seen some examples that have caused us great concern," he stated.

Makharadze, 35, reportedly had been drinking when he climbed into his car late Friday and sped through one of the lively streets of Washington's Dupont Circle neighborhood, near the city center.

He triggered a five-car pileup that killed the 16-year-old passenger of one of the vehicles, according to Washington police.

While the Georgian government has said it will cooperate with U.S. authorities to resolve the matter, it has not stated that it is prepared to lift the immunity.

The State Department, acknowledging that foreign governments have traditionally been loath to do so, said it may ask that he be removed from his post and could be barred from entry into the United States.

The Car accident followed a separate incident in New York involving diplomats accredited to the United Nations.

On December 29, New York police picked up Boris Obnosov, a first secretary at the Russian Mission, and Yuri Orange, first secretary at the Belarus Mission, on suspicion of drunk driving and assault.

The two diplomats smelled of alcohol and had slurred speech, according to the New York police, who claim that one officer was punched in the face during his attempt to detain the two men.

The men were reportedly released after they presented documents showing they had diplomatic immunity but the Russian Foreign Ministry maintains that its representative was ill-treated and has asked for an apology.

For his part, New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani has asked that the two diplomats be removed from their posts at the United Nations in a letter this week to Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

But the State Department says it is awaiting a report from the New York City Police Department and a review by city authorities of the incident before making a decision on the fate of the two diplomats.

The Russian Mission in New York is notorious for its parking violations, according to U.S. officials.

In 1996, a total of 14,437 parking tickets were handed out to the 122-car fleet of the Russian Mission.

(AFP)

Mixed Reaction in Pakistan as Military Gets Political Role

ISLAMABAD — Pakistan's major political parties were divided yesterday over a presidential move giving the Armed Forces a formal role i g ernmen'

The move came only weeks before general elections were scheduled to be held.

President Farooq Ahmed Leghari on Monday set up a Council for Defence and National Security in which the top military brass will work with civilian authorities to aid and advise the government on key national issues.

Headed by the president, the new advisory body is made up of the prime minister, chairman of the joint chiefs of staff committee, chiefs of army, navy and air force, and ministers for defense, foreign affairs, interior and finance.

The move immediately sparked concern about the fate of the February 3 polls scheduled by Leghari after he dismissed the government of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto on November 5 for alleged corruption and misrule.

The mass circulation daily *Jang* said Tuesday the National Security Council was likely to recommend proclamation of a state of emergency and postponement of the impending polls.

No official comment was immediately available on the report, which quoted informed sources as saying the council would hold its first meeting this week.

Leghari and interim Prime Minister Malik Meraj Khalid have repeatedly said there will be no deviation from the election schedule.

Leaders from Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) criticized the decision to set up the council, but a prominent figure in other mainstream party, the Pakistan Muslim League (PML), supported the decision.

"The caretakers had no mandate do so," said Naseerullah Babar, a PPP leader who was interior minister in Bhutto's government.

"Since President Leghari and his caretaker are isolated and without political support, they have now decided to lean upon the credibility and honor of the Armed Forces," said Aitzaz Ahsan, another PPP leader.

Mushahid Hussain, information secretary of the PML, which is headed by former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, said the National Security Council would help promote political stability.

The PML leader said the council would help formulate economic, foreign affairs and national security policies.

The country's main fundamentalist party, the Jamaat-i-Islami (JI), which has boycotted the coming elections, bitterly opposed the move.

Leghari "has got no right to form a National Security Council without consulting the masses," JI chief Qazi Hussain Ahmed told a public meeting in southwestern city of Quetta on Monday.

He demanded that the army should only concentrate on guarding the frontiers.

The JI's deputy chief, Ghafoor Ahmed, said the presidential decision would bring "bad name" to the Armed Forces.



LEGHARI

"This is against national interest becuase it will affect the image and honor of of the ramed Forces," he told AFP.

The interim government's Information Minister, Irshad Ahmed Haqqani, has said the formation of the council would not undermine supremacy of the Parliament.

Stressing the advisory status of the new body in matters of overall national security, Haqqani said Monday that the move did not mean giving the Armed Forces a share in power.

Analysts said direct involvement of the Armed Forces in running national affairs would help minimize chances for military intervention witnessed in the past in times of political turmoil.

Pakistan has seen long spells of military rule. even after restoration of civilian rule in 1985. After about a decade of martial law the army has exercised behind-the-scence influence in political affairs. (AFP)

Billionaire's Daughter Files Paternity Suit Against Imran Khan

LOS ANGELES — Sita White, daughter of the late tycoon lord Gordon White, filed a paternity suit here Monday seeking to prove Pakistani prime minister candidate Imran Khan fathered her four-year-old daughter.

White, 35, said she took the legal step when the one-time cricket hero denied he was the father of her daughter and challenged her to bring the matter to court to prove his paternity.

White, who lives with her daughter in Beverly Hills, filed the suit here, demanding that Khan provide a blood sample within 30 days that would prove his paternity. She is also seeking child support for an unspecified sum.

"If he fails to do so, then we believe that it is tantamout to an admission of paternity," said White's attorney Gloria Allred, a celebrity domestic law attorney.

White said Khan had assured her that in the future he would acknowledge his paternity to his daughter, Tyrian Jade, himself. Instead, several days ago he publicly denied that he was the father.

"I trusted him and he betrayed me. By going public (with his denial) he has called me a liar in front of the world," said White during a news conference in Allred's office.

Her charges come ahead of the February 3 elections. Khan campaigned on an anti-corruption platform that calls for respecting women's rights and Islamic law, including public execution of those found to be corrupt.

The former Pakistani national cricket team captain has come under fire by political opponents who claim he is unfit for office because under Islamic law having sex with a woman without marriage is a major sin.

White said the penalty for such an act under Islamic law is to be stoned to death.

White denied that she timed her suit to sabotage his campaign efforts, saying it would never have been an issue if he had not publicly denied his paternity and shamed her.

"It's devastating for me that it has become necessary to go public to defend my character and integrity," she said.

"I have never asked for anything of Imran," she insisted while holding the hand of her husband, actor Allan Marshall. "Now I ask for the truth and for the rights which my daughter is entitled to enjoy."

Khan, 44, is popular with young people for winning the 1992 cricket world cup, but has become embroiled in a dispute with Benazir Bhutto's spouse Asif Ali Zardari over alleged blocked donations to Khan's hospital.

White and Khan had a relationship between 1987 and 1988, but kept seeing each other even after it ended. White said on October 21, 1991 she told Khan in Los Angeles that she wanted a child with him.

Khan was enthusiastic initially and expressed hope the child would be a boy, Allred said. About four months into her pregnancy, White learned through an ultrasound test that she was carrying a girl.

Upon learning the child was a girl, Allred said, Khan told White she should consider an abortion because a girl would "not be able to play cricket." She refused and gave birth on June 15, 1992 to Tyrian Jade.

Allred said after the birth White and Khan spoke on the phone numerous times and that Khan inquired about Tyrian Jade's health, but never offered to take on the burden or any of the costs of her upbringing.

Allred charged that when Khan decided to pursue his political aspirations he chose to deny his fatherhood.

"Apparently in Pakistan, a person who has fathered a child outside of marriage could be disqualified from being eligible to be prime minister," Allred said.

"It may therefore be that for political reasons, Mr. Khan has decided that he cannot acknowledge that Tyrian is his child for fear that it could cost him the election," she said.

"It is not cricket for a father to deny his child in order to gain a political advantage," she added. "We look forward to arranging a blood test immediately so that the results can be obtained before the Pakistani election."

(AFP)

Canada Settles Former PM Mulroney's Libel Suit

MONTREAL, Canada — Former prime minister Brian Mulroney has reached an out-of-court settlement to end his C$50 million ($37 million) libel lawsuit against the Canadian government, his lawyers said on Monday.

Mulroney's lawyers gave details of the settlement, reached on Sunday, in a Montreal court where the unprecedented libel suit was to be heard on Monday.

As part of the settlement, the Canadian government apologized for wrongly accusing Mulroney of taking kickbacks in Air Canada's C$1.8 billion ($1.3 billion) purchase of Airbus jets in 1988.

The settlement included an acknowledgment by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) that any conclusions of wrongdoing by Mulroney "were—and are—unjustified."

"The government of Canada and the RCMP regret any damage suffered by Mr. Mulroney and his family and fully apologize to them," the settlement said.

The RCMP also agreed to pay Mulroney's legal costs, which were undisclosed, while the former prime minister agreed to waive his claim to damages.

It was believed to be the first time that a former Western leader had sued the government of his own country for libel.

Mulroney, who was Canada's Conservative prime minister from 1984 to 1993, sued the Justice Department and RCMP in November 1995 over allegations made in an official letter they sent to Swiss authorities in September 1995 accusing him of accepting illegal commissions in the Airbus purchase.

Air Canada, now a publicly held company, was owned by the Canadian government when it bought the 34 Airbus A-320 jets in 1988.

The Justice Department letter said Mulroney was suspected of accepting up to C$4 million ($3 million) in kickbacks in the Airbus deal. He was also suspected of being part of a "conspiracy" with former Newfoundland premier Frank Moores and businessman Karlheinz Schreiber to defraud the Canadian government, the letter said.

At a news conference, Mulroney's lawyers said the settlement, reached less than 24 hours before the civil case was to begin, exonerated Mulroney of any wrongdoing in the Airbus matter.

"Mr. Mulroney's name has been vindicated and that is the only thing he really wanted," Gerald Tremblay told reporters.

Tremblay said Mulroney agreed to the last-minute settlement because it included an unequivocal apology and recognition by the government that the 31 allegations against Mulroney in the 11-page Justice Department letter were groundless.

Until agreeing to make that apology, the government had only been willing to express regret that the letter, which asked Swiss authorities to obtain information on certain bank accounts in Switzerland, had been leaked to the media.

Tremblay said Mulroney, a corporate lawyer who led the Tories to majority victories in the 1984 and 1988 federal elections, was pleased with the settlement.

"Mr. Mulroney is back at work and very happy to continue on with his life," Tremblay said.

Government officials also said they were satisfied with the settlement, but the RCMP refused to specify whether Mulroney would no longer be part of its ongoing investigation of the Airbus deal.

"I'm not saying Mr. Mulroney is or isn't a suspect," RCMP commissioner Philip Murray told a news conference in Ottawa.

The libel suit, unprecedented for its scope, could have had profound legal and political implications if it had gone to trial. Mulroney's lawyers had subpoenaed several senior government officials, including current Liberal Justice Minister Allan Rock.

In the settlement, the parties agreed Rock was not involved in the RCMP's decision to initiate the Airbus investigation. (Reuter)



Andean Witchdoctors Dance for Peace

***LIMA, Peru** - Andean witchdoctors armed with skulls and potions sought on Monday to achieve what religious and civil leaders have failed to do during three weeks of pleas and petitons: convince rebels to end Peru's hostage crisis.*

More than a dozen witchdoctors from the Peruvian highlands descended on the Japanese ambassador's residence in Lima, where Marxist guerillas were still holding 74 hostages, for a colourful, 15-minute ceremony.

Dressed in cloaks, ponchos and feathers, the witchdoctors chanted "we want peace," spat potions into the air, danced over machetes, held animal skulls aloft, burnt incense and freed doves. (Reuter)

Branson Prepares for Globe-Circling Balloon Trip

***MARRAKESH** - Richard Branson, the thrill-seeking British tycoon of the Virgin empire, was to start yesterday his long-awaited attempt to be the first to fly nonstop around the world in a balloon.*

Branson, arrived Sunday with his two co-pilots of the Virgin global challenger, saying "we have got the final green light" to lift off sometime between 0600 and 0900 GMT Tuesday (yesterday).

His balloon was to be semi-inflated with helium gas Monday night in preparation for the launch which he calls "the greatest challenge in my life."

Twenty engineers have arrived in Marrakesh checking the 53-meter (174-foot), $3 million helium hot-air balloon to be piloted by Branson, per Lindstrand and Rory Mccarthy. (AP)

Car Bomb Kills Six, Wounds 20 in Algerian Capital

ALGIERS, Algeria - A powerful car bomb exploded Tuesday afternoon in the heart of the Algerian capital, killing six people and wounding 20 others.

Hospital officials said the bomb exploded at 2:15 pm near Place Audin, a bustling shopping district in downtown Algiers. The government announced the death and injury toll.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the bombing, the latest to bloody the North African nation wracked by a five-year insurgency that has killed at least 60,000 people.

An armed group killed 18 people early Monday and wounded 18 others in a raid on the coastal town of Douaouda-Marine, west of Algiers, security forces in the capital said. Witnesses told state-run TV that the attackers had threatened to return.

On Sunday, 16 people - including two children - were killed 24 hours earlier in an attack on the village of Benachour, in the Blida region 50 kilometers (30 miles) south of the capital.

Algeria's insurgency began in January 1992, when the army-backed government canceled legislative elections that candidates of the Islamic Salvation Front were poised to win.

(AP)

BELFAST, United Kingdom (Jan. 6): Police guard the burning remains of a car, believed to have been used, by the IRA in a rocket attack on the Belfast courthouse. A police officer and a women pedestrian were injured. Three months ago the IRA bombed British Army headquarters in Lisburn, County Antrim, killing one soldier, with another 30 civilians and troops being hurt in the blast, which carried no warning.

(AFP PHOTO)



WASHINGTON, DC, United States (Jan. 6): U.S. Rep. Newt Gingrich (R-Georgia) leaves a conference of Republican leaders on Capitol Hill in Washington. Gingrich met with his Republican colleagues in a bid to ensure his re-election as leader of the House of Representatives amid fierce debate over his handling of an ethics probe.

(AFP PHOTO)

Detonation Heard at Ambassador's Compound

LIMA – A detonation was heard before dawn yesterday that appeared to be coming from the Japanese ambassador's residence, where Peruvian rebels have been holding 74 hostages for three weeks.

Photographer Scott Dalton, who was on the rooftop of a house across the street from the residence, said several photographers were awakened about 4 a.m. by what sounded like a gunshot.

He said the noise seemed to be coming from inside the compound and sounded like at least one explosion, followed by an echo or another detonation.

A local station, Panamericana television, quoted unnamed police sources as saying the sound appeared to be an automatic weapons fire, but they could not tell the caliber of the weapon.

It said, however, that police had no reports of any injuries at the residence.

It was the second time since the standoff began Dec. 17 that there has been a detonation inside the compound. The last time such an explosion occurred was Dec. 26, and it was blamed on one of the ambassador's dogs, which tripped a land mine and was killed.

Rebels have said they have mined approaches to the massive residence, which they seized during a gala cocktail party. (AP)

Austrian Plane Hijacked to Berlin but Hijacker Detained

BERLIN – An Austrian airliner was hijacked yesterday en route from Berlin to Vienna, but the hijacker was soon overpowered, German and Austrian officials said.

Sources close to the German government said the Mcdonnell-Douglas plane carrying 28 people was hijacked after it took off from Berlin's Tegel Airport yesterday morning bound for Vienna.

The lone hijacker forced the plane to turn around as it was approaching its destination, and the aircraft later landed back in Berlin at around 1:00 p.m. (1200 GMT), one source was quoted by the German news agency DPA as saying.

An airport spokesman in Vienna meanwhile said the hijacker had been overpowered after the AUA airline plane landed back at Tegel Airport. No one was injured in the incident. (AFP)

Defying Government Warning, Labor Protests Continue

SEOUL – Defying a government warning, labor leaders vowed Monday to keep fighting a law adopted 12 days ago that they said would threaten workers' jobs.

The outlawed Confederation of Trade Unions claimed that more than 200,000 workers were striking at 164 companies Monday and predicted more would join the strikes Tuesday.

But the Labor Ministry said only 64,000 workers from 56 companies were taking part, less than half the number last week. Ministry officials predicted that with little public support, the protests would subside later this week.

In an effort to stop the illegal walkouts, the state prosecutor's office summoned 100 labor leaders for questioning yesterday. Union leaders said they would not honor the summonses, which they believe would lead to their arrests.

Prosecutors said they would seek arrest warrants for at least 20 key labor leaders for leading illegal strikes. (AP)

Blast in India's Assam State Damages Office

GAUHATI, India – An explosion destroyed four rooms of a government office in a remote northeastern state where guerillas are fighting for a separate state for Bodo tribals, an official said yesterday.

The blast occurred in the same area in northern Assam state where separatist guerillas set off an explosion on a river bridge Jan. 1.

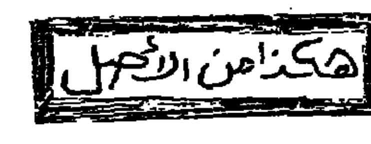
The explosion coincided with a crackdown on insurgents that the army launched in western parts of Assam, where the guerillas set off two explosions, one on a roadside culvert and another on a train, killing 38 people.

No one was injured in Monday night's blast in Gareshwar town, said Sanjeev Kumar, the administrator of Kamrup district.

The explosive, planted in the corridor of the one-storey building and triggered by a remote-controlled device shattered the roof and walls of four rooms, Kumar said.

The area is 40 kilometers (25 miles) north of Gauhati, the largest city in Assam state, or 2,000 kilometers (1,250 miles) east of New Delhi. (AP)





Europe Counts the Cost of Deep Freeze

PARIS — As farmers, insurers and builders add up their losses from more than two weeks of frost and snow across Europe, business has never been better for plumbers, salt merchants and energy suppliers.

Consumers are also having to reach for their pockets because prices of fresh vegetables have soared since last week as stocks have run down because the ground is so hard that growers have been unable to uproot their crops.

The price of leeks in France has gone from 3.5 francs to 19 francs ($3.8) a kilogram at the Paris wholesale food market and vegetable soup has become almost a luxury dish.

However Farmers said there was no risk of a long-term shortage because once the thaw set in, the vegetables now in the fields would still be eatable, they said.

The frost which affects the setting of concrete, has also plunged the building industry into difficulty although the French National Builders' Federation (FNB) said the situation was "not dramatic".

The FNB said the industry permanently maintained a special fund for "bad weather" which was used to compensate workers who were laid off.

In Germany, the cold has paralyzed river navigation with more than half of the country's 7,300 kilometers (4,500 miles) of waterways covered with ice which in places is 50 centimeters (1 foot six inches) thick. Most of the 3,000 registered river boats are stranded in the ports and have to pay a daily fee of 1,500 to 2,000 German marks ($1,000 to $1,300) with the result that many firms are at risk of going out of business.

In Belgium, the Forges de Clabecq smelting plant which a few days ago was declared bankrupt has been badly damaged by the Arctic weather and experts say it will cost some 20 million Belgian francs ($625,000) to get it going again.

Insurance firms fear they will be forced to pay out large sums to compensate customers for damage caused by the exceptionally harsh weather conditions.

The Inter-Mutuelles Assistance (IMA), the biggest assistance organization in France, has been receiving 2,000 to 2,500 calls for help a day — about 60 to 70 percent more than usual for this time of year.

On January 2, Mondial assistance in France processed 80 percent more calls, mainly from motorists in difficulty and for broken bones and sprains caused by falls.

In Britain, insurers said payouts would at least equal the £500 million ($750 million) paid last year, mainly because of damage caused by burst pipes.

But the news is not bad for everybody and plumbers are already working overtime to satisfy customers. Business is expected to increase further when the thaw comes at the end of the week and water starts spurting from cracked pipes and water-mains.

Suppliers of heating appliances and energy also are finding it difficult to keep up with demand.

The salt merchants have never had it so good as local authorities and motorway operators pour tons of salt on roads to melt the ice.

The Mines de Potasse d'Alsace salt mines in eastern France has doubled its opening hours, even staying open round the clock to ensure clients are served.

Since the beginning of January, 500 lorries and three to four trains loaded with salt have left the mines every day mainly for towns in eastern and northern France. This represents a total of some 15,000 metric tons a day out of an average annual output of 250,000 to 500,000 tons. The Salins du Midi in southern France are just as busy.

Energy consumption in France which dropped slightly during the Christmas holiday, has surged since the beginning of the year. Sales of electricity have come close to breaking the record of 70,000 megawatts attained on January 4 1993. A maximum of 68,000 megawatts was expected for Monday night.

In Germany, energy consumption went up by 10 percent during the festive season.

Gaz de France, the state-owned gas company had predicted that gas consumption Monday could equal that of January 2 which exceeded the previous record of 2.4 billion kilowatts per hour reached in the winter of 1991. (AFP)

China's Big Four Commercial Banks Cut Links With Trust Business

BEIJING — China's "Big Four" commercial banks have cut their links with trust and investment business in an effort to stabilize credit and stop high-risk investments.

The *China Daily* quoted Tuesday a spokesman from China's central bank as saying that 186 trust and investment companies previously under the control of the principal four government-owned banks had been disconnected or transferred into ordinary bank affiliates.

"This marks the completion of an important step in the moves from financial authorities to separate banking from trust and investment," the spokesman said.

China's "Big Four" banks are the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China, the China Construction Bank, the Bank of China and the agricultural Bank of China.

According to industry sources, their exit results from a sharp flow of bank money into high-risk investments, including stocks, which created credit problems both for the banks and the stock market in 1993 and 1994.

"The inadequacy of regulation and the mixture of financial activities resulted in insufficient risk-hedging measures and misconduct in business operations," the newspaper quoted a Beijing-based expert as saying.

"Some companies illegally diverted credit funds into securities to manipulate stock markets or invested in other risky ventures such as speculative real estate," it added.

By the start of 1995, there were 400 trust and investment companies in China, most attached to banks, and the "Big Four" banks became known as "Financial Department Stores" for the wide range of services they offered.

The financial disorder prompted China's authorities to order the separation of the conglomerate of fledging lending and risk management institutions into commercial banks, insurance companies, securities firms and trust and investment companies.

In 1995, the commercial bank law stipulated that China's commercial banks could only deal with deposits and credit services and settlement.

China's remaining commercial banks are expected to sever remaining links with trust and investment companies by the end of 1997.

Meanwhile, according to another AFP report from Hong Kong, the Chinese government has ordered the closure of China Agricultural Development Trust and Investment Corp., a bank which lends to Chinese farmers, after it ran up nearly $2.5 billion in debts, the press reported here Tuesday.

The firm, set up in 1988, used to be the only Chinese establishment authorized by Beijing to distribute loans allocated by the World Bank.

It was ordered to close by the State Council, or central government, after it accumulated internal and external debts of 20 billion yuan ($2.41 billion), the independent *Ming Pao* said.

The lender had notched up 12 billion yuan in non-performing loans alone, the report said.

The wind-up order was given recently and in strict confidence, but leaked out on Monday, triggering a fall on the Shenzhen Stock Exchange, *Ming Pao* said.

The Shenzhen a share index fell 21.17 points or 6.22 percent to 319.24 on Monday and the B share index fell 5.71 points or 4.01 percent to 136.45 on total turnover of 3.98 billion yuan. (AFP)

Britain's Building Societies Forsake Mutual Ownership for Capitalist Path

LONDON — Britain's building societies, established from the 18th century as mutually-owned ventures, are increasingly taking the path towards full-blown capitalism by converting into publicly owned banks.

On Monday, the third-biggest building society, the Woolwich, said it would float on the London stock exchange in July, to become one of Britain's top 10 banks in terms of total asset size, with current funds of 30 billion pounds (50. 5 billion dollars).

The Woolwich and other big mutual societies are following in the footsteps of the Abbey National, which launched the trend in 1989 by becoming a bank.

By the end of 1997, three of the existing top four building societies, companies which are owned by account holders who deposit funds in them, and traditionally focused on house loans and savings, will have renounced their mutual status.

Amid growing competition in the financial services market, their aim is to expand into a wider range of financial services and raise funds by tapping into the capital markets, which are off-limits to building societies.

"We want the flexibility to continue to grow and continue to offer a broader range of services and geographical coverage," explained Hillary Mcvitty, a spokeswoman for the Woolwich.

In June, the country's biggest building society, the Halifax, which has assets of more of 100 billion pounds, also intends to take the plunge, and convert from mutual status to a public bank.

And the Alliance and Leicester, the fourth-biggest building society, and the Northern Rock, also plan to join the stock market in 1997.

Building societies have been able to expand beyond their core business of house loans and savings into areas such as life assurance and investment trusts since rules governing them were relaxed in 1987.

But with any major move requiring a vote of approval by the society's members (nine million, in the case of the Halifax), which can only take place once a year at the annual general meeting, room for maneouvre is still limited.

"There are substantial restrictions on the speed and scope of operations we can go into," said the Woolwich spokeswoman, adding that banks, which since the 1980s have been increasingly muscling in on the house loan market, operate in a much freer environment.

"The legislative framework governing building societies is substantially more restrictive than that which applies to banks," she said.

And this is a time when competition is intensifying in the financial services arena, with retailers such as Marks and Spencer, and entrepreneur Richard Branson's virgin group, entering into the market.

However, Nationwide, the second-largest building society, is bucking the trend to keep its mutual status.

Remaining a building society frees Nationwide from the necessity of maximizing profits in order to pay out dividends to shareholders, explained a spokesman.

Since building societies' surplus revenues are always reinvested, this allows Nationwide to undercut banks, by offering lower home loan interest rates and higher savings rates for investors, he said.

Nonetheless, apart from Nationwide, most of the big players will have converted to banks soon. Some 70 or 80 smaller building societies will be the ones that remain. (AFP)

Supreme Court to Rule on Assisted Suicide

WASHINGTON -- The U.S. Supreme Court will confront the controversial issue of medically assisted suicides Wednesday when it considers two district court rulings that go against laws banning the practice.

The notorious "Dr. Death," Jack Kevorkian, who has helped nearly 50 terminally ill people end their lives, has been the focus of the issue for several years. But Kevorkian is just the tip of the iceberg in an emotional national debate closely tied to the constitution's protection of individual liberties.

The nine judges will weigh two rulings made in the states of Washington and New York, where medically assisted suicides are against the law. The decisions favor the relatives and friends of the patients, saying that states which prevent sick people from choosing to die are violating their constitutional rights.

Supporters of medically assisted suicides base their argument on the 14th Amendment to the constitution, which recognizes an individual's liberty. They say that everyone has the right to die "with dignity" and to choose death when they are still conscious of their own condition.

More than 30 U.S. states have banned assisted suicides since 1990. Defenders of the practice accuse them of hypocrisy because the majority of the states allow doctors to withdraw respiratory or cardiac support systems from terminally ill patients if they so request. Many of these cases have occurred in Washington and New York states.

But dozens of religious and medical organizations, including the American Medical Association, are lobbying against assisted suicide, which they say is immoral and contradictory to the medical philosophy of saving lives. President Bill Clinton's administration has also stated its opposition to the practice.

When the Supreme Court hearing on the two cases begins Wednesday, thousands of handicapped people, members of the organization "Not Dead Yet", are expected to stage a noisy demonstration in Washington against assisted suicides.

And the issue that is tearing apart the country has also split the medical community. The respected *New England Journal of Medicine* published two opposing editorials: one asked that sick people "get medical services in their best interests" including death with dignity, while the other condemned assisted suicide and advocated "guidelines for good care of dying patients."

The implications of the Supreme Court decision, which will be announced before the end of its session in July, are huge because the ruling will have the force of law throughout the United States.

It may also call into question the Hippocratic oath taken by physicians who assert: "I will not give poison to anyone, though asked to do so, nor will I suggest such a plan."

(AFP)

S. African Road Deaths Reach 1,092 in a Month

JOHANNESBURG -- A total 1,092 people died on South African roads in the past month, a 30 percent hike compared to the same period in last year's holiday season, the National Traffic Information Center said recently.

The main cause of death was speeding, accountable for 400 road deaths since the beginning of the Christmas break on December 3, while more than 100 deaths were caused by drivers who fell asleep at the wheel.

A further 150 people who died were either drunken pedestrians knocked down by passing vehicles, or the victims of accidents caused by drunken driving.

In the same 1995 period, a total 765 people died in traffic accidents in South Africa, now rated as having one of the 10 highest road death totals in the world.

Justice Minister Dullah Omar said it was time to dole out stiffer penalties for infringing traffic laws.

"South Africa cannot afford the loss of lives and the costs which amounts to billions of rands each year," he said.

(AFP)

Two Rare Nepalese Red Pandas Born in NZ Zoo

AUCKLAND -- Tashi, a Nepalese red panda at Auckland Zoo in New Zealand, gave birth to two cubs recently in a New Year boost for the endangered species.

Zoo spokeswoman Frances Valintine said the new arrivals were grey, about three inches (seven cm) long and resembled small rodents.

The worldwide population of Nepalese red pandas is about 300, of which 222 are in captivity. "Through deforestation, there's no habitat left for them," Valintine said.

The births were part of a captive breeding program designed ultimately to return some animals to the wild, with plans to create a national park in their native Nepal, she said.

The animals are not directly related to the giant panda and bear some resemblance to a raccoon, with rusty fur, white stripes and rings around the eyes, said Valintine.

Zoo staff were able to see the cubs via an infra-red camera in a nesting box, but cannot yet determine their sex.

The cubs were suckling while mother Tashi rested and father Mario displayed total indifference. "At the moment he's showing no interest. He plays a very low key role as far as parenting," Valintine said.

(Reuter)

U.S. Military Radar Tries to Impede Drug Flights

IQUITOS, Peru -- Although he's at a Peruvian military base in this peaceful and isolated Amazon river port, hundreds of miles from areas where rebels roam, U.S. Air Force Maj. Alan Berryman doesn't take chances.

He has fortified his radar station with walls 9 feet tall (3 meters tall) and 10 sandbags deep and cleared underbrush well outside the coiled barbed wire encircling the site.

His 30 American airmen are helping disrupt cocaine smuggling by plane and forcing the drug cartels to find more roundabout, more expensive ways to move their contraband.

The station's swiftly rotating Vietnam-era radar, installed last February, is one of four the U.S. military has in Peru and Colombia for identifying and tracking drug-smuggling planes.

In the past year, the radars seriously disrupted the long-time cocaine "air bridge" in coordination with U.S. customs service executive jets, Air Force radar planes and Colombian and Peruvian fighters.

U.S. commanders who oversee the operation from Howard Air Base in Panama say drug flights by big planes over Peru and Colombia have dropped three-fourths since the operation began in mid-1995, when there were from 30 to 40 flights a month.

In just a few months that year, 27 suspected drug planes were shot down, forced down or destroyed on the ground by the Colombian and Peruvian military after being identified by U.S. radar and tracked by American planes.

The figure dropped to four in 1996.

Drug pilots have switched to much smaller planes, skirting the radars by flying east into the vastness of Brazil or evading them by skimming the treetops.

Now, radar duty beside a Peruvian technician in the Iquitos station's air-conditioned trailer can be quite dull.

"I haven't tracked a legitimate druggie since I started here," said Maj. Charles A. Blackmon Jr., who arrived in October from Eglin Air Force Base in Florida.

While the radar campaign has choked off flights by big planes capable of carrying tons at a time, there is no evidence illicit drug exports have diminished.

U.S. military commanders blame that on limited resources, as well as endemic corruption in the region.

A few well-placed bribes can render the work of the U.S. radars ineffective.

A gang of 17 people, including two Colombian Air Force enlisted men who had access to classified U.S. radar data, were arrested in 1996 on suspicion of helping drug flights evade detection.

"You're tackling an enemy with an unlimited budget in an environment where people are desperate for money," said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Doug Serrano. "I don't think we've figured out how to beat the corruption."

(AP)

Town and Landscape Planning

Concern for the welfare of our physical surroundings, our environment, has won acceptance and respectability in a mere three decades in Denmark, and offers hope for a healthier life and preservation of a cultural inheritance.

When I raise my eyes and look out of the window, I can see a huge copper beech in its full, fresh foliage. There are a few birch trees in the foreground, some bushes and the roof of the neighbor's house. To the side the banks and quietly flowing water of Odense River. Further away in the distance I can see the spire of St. Knud's Church, on the rim of my urban horizon. The Town Hall is on the other side of the church. The chime of the church bells underline the impression of a rural landscape with an urban atmosphere -- and a reminder of the quiet that can exist in the center of a noisy, dynamic town. An impression of Denmark.



When a building is completed with the high technical and artistic quality it deserves it becomes an evergreen -- a section of Aabenraa.

The town, and the landscape, are ours -- and mine, I can enjoy the view, as the people of Odense have probably done unconsciously for centuries. One of life's free pleasures, though it may not seen to be when the mortgage has to be paid. But even the mortgage payment cannot destroy the feeling that the landscape belongs to all of us, and that we should welcome the stranger to share a sight that gives us so much cause for pride and pleasure.

In spite of its lack of size, Denmark is unique in Europe. No other country in Europe has quite this mixture of islands, straits, fjords and passages around an undulating landscape with broad beaches to the west, and fjords to the east. A landscape moulded by culture, reflecting the dynamism and creative urge of successive generations. Reminders of past history with Bronze Age burial mounds and hundreds of village churches, and of modern reality with power plants, wind turbines, high voltage power masts, and industrial corridors lining the motorways.

In my relatively short life I have seen general plans replaced by new regional plans, each one borne by an earnest retroactive determination to control a development that may well be uncontrollable, by an irresistible belief in growth. A growth that may well appear, but often does so far away from where it was decided in the plans. Plans are so often the child of changing five years fashions of thought. Five years on, a new fashion prevails.

During my childhood years in the 1950s and 1960s I grew in step with the welfare state and industrial society. I could fish, or swim, in Svendborg Sound. I saw the fish disappear, and the swimmers disappeared as well when the "Bathing Prohibited" signs went up.

My generation began quietly to write letters to the authorities about the problem. The usual answer hinted that we were disaffected, left-wing environment opportunists. But that was before people began to realize that no matter whether you live in Copenhagen, in Riga, New York or in Hong Kong a clean environment is your foundation and the basis of the survival of your culture.

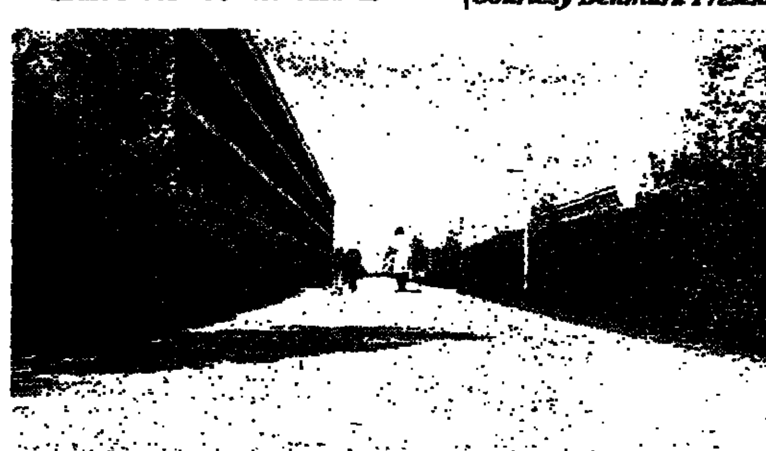
In the 1970s we built thousands of new and often very good residential apartments on the outskirts of our cities, but the medieval town centers were treated with a careless indifference that systematically did more damage to the towns than all the fire and war destruction of the last thousand years. It was an indifference driven by unreflecting faith in the future, and the economic prosperity the future would bring. Respect for our cultural history paid poor dividends, and the work of generations was destroyed overnight.

Some of this destruction still takes place, but I have become more optimistic recently. There is more understanding of the need for legislation to protect the qualities of city and landscape. Environmental legislation has been accepted by most Danes as a natural element in protecting our life and welfare.

It has taken less than a half century to formulate environmental regulations to safeguard our common inheritance, a very brief period compared to the long stretch of Danish history. The first steps were taken in the first decades of this century with legislation to protect valuable buildings. Today we have regulations to protect landscapes and regions, urban areas and special sites, and funding to preserve protected buildings.

There is a growing agreement that these regulations are necessary, for they are there to protect the inheritance that past generations have left for us, and for future generations. A nation which loses its landscape and building culture will have great in preserving its cultural individuality.

(Courtesy Denmark Presents)



An enormous effort is needed to improve the architectural, social and cultural quality of many of the buildings erected over the last half-century. This residential development is near Odense.

Musician Makes Multi-Million-Dollar Court Claim

HONG KONG -- An American musician is suing Hong Kong's Academy for Performing Arts and the Swiss chemical giant Ciba-Geigy, saying his life was shattered after he inhaled a pesticide during a rehearsal.

Kristan Phillips, 47, a former timpanist with the Hong Kong Philharmonic Society, brought the case to court on Monday, alleging the pesticide Diazinon left him with brain, neurological and cardiovascular damage and psychiatric problems.

The court heard that Phillips, who lives in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, was overcome after he inhaled the pesticide while practising at the academy on June 21, 1987.

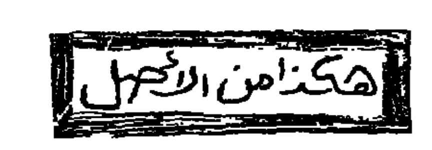
He was one of almost 100 people who were in the academy while it was being sprayed for pest control.

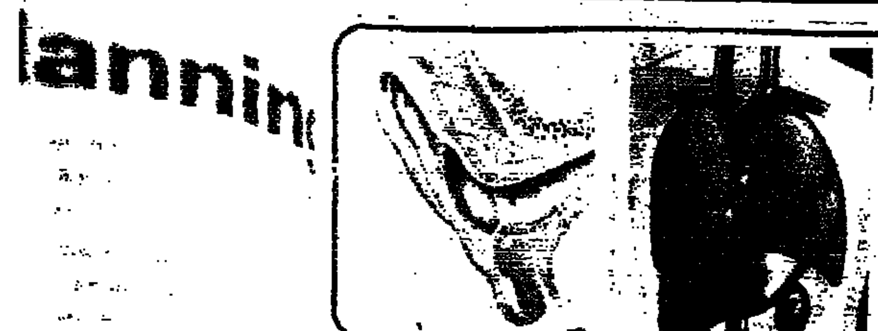
Legal aid is covering the cost of Phillips' personal injury suit, in which he is claiming 20 million Hong Kong dollars (U.S.$2.59 million).

If, as expected, the trial runs until May, costs for Phillips' side could run as high as $100 million Hong Kong dollars, sources quoted by the *South China Morning Post* said.

The suit has been filed against the academy, Ciba-Geigy (Hong Kong) Ltd., the Hong Kong Philharmonic Society, Initial Environmental Services Ltd. and Wong Ching Ho Co. Ltd.

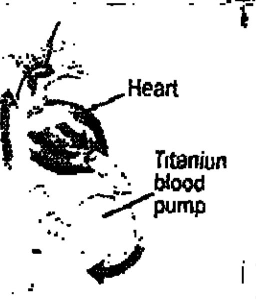
(AFP)

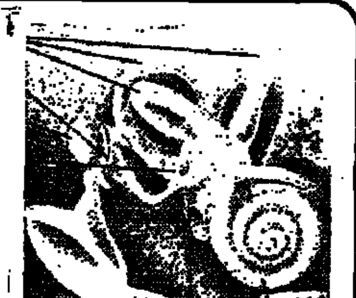












Why You Need a Flu Shot

The reasons may surprise you

You are suddenly flattened — as if ambushed from behind — with a 102 - to 104-degree fever, headache, extreme fatigue, weakness, and severe aches and pains in muscles you didn't know you had. Most likely you've got the flu. And most likely you feel BAD.

Working or playing through the flu is impossible, unless you're the type who can walk on hot coals and feel no pain. You'll probably have to take to your bed for three or more days. But even after you recover — usually within three to seven days — you can be left with a dragged-down feeling that can persist for weeks and is sometimes compounded by depression.

Too few of us understand that the flu is more than an inconvenience. There are life-threatening risks associated with it. Consequently too few of us take precautions to prevent contracting the flu, or influenza, to use its proper name. Here's why you need to take this virus seriously:

What is the flue? It's a viral infection that attacks through the respiratory system. There are three basic types of flu virus — A, B and C — but only A and B are responsible for flu epidemics.

What are the other symptoms? Upper respiratory discomforts such as a runny or stuffy nose and sneezing only sometimes accompany the flu. Whereas the sore throat that occurs with a cold typically disappears in a day or two, the throat soreness from flu is likely to get worse by the second or third day. Also, the muscle aches that accompany flu are usually much more severe than with other fever-inducing ailments. The lower respiratory tract is a common site of attack, too, resulting in a dry, hacking cough that can become severe.

Sometimes the digestive tract also takes a beating from vomiting and diarrhea, especially in children. When flu hits below the belt, it can be a challenge to keep down anything more nourishing than tea and water. But this symptom of influenza is not to be confused with a stomach virus, which isn't any kind of flu at all and is not accompanied by the fever, aches, pain and severe malaise that characterize flu.

How do I get the flu? It spreads like a cold, primarily moving from person to person via virus-contaminated airborne droplets released by coughs, sneezes and even normal conversation. The illness can be spread, as well, through contaminated hands and inanimate objects.

Moreover, like colds, flu can be transmitted by people who have *not yet developed symptoms*. The incubation period — the time between becoming infected with the virus and knowing you are ill — is one to three days, and during that time you can spread the virus to someone else. Once flu symptoms develop, you remain contagious for another three to five days.

Is it possible to protect myself from the flu? Yes, getting an annual vacination weeks before the flu season helps significantly reduce your risk of catching the flu. Researchers worldwide monitor the changes in the flu virus, and before each flu season, drug manufacturers are usually able to produce a revised vacine that incorporates protection against the newest virus variants.

Why do I need a flu shot every year? The viruses that cause influenza are genetically unstable. They change both gradually and abruptly, and each change may enbable the virus to skirt around your hard-won immunity from a previous viral bout, invade your respiratory tract and cause the flu. This genetic instability is why people get influenza over and over again, why they get it some years and not others, why some attacks make them much sicker, and why it's necessary to get a new flu shot every year for maximum protection.

Who should be immunized? The following people have the greatest chance of suffering serious complications from the flu:

* Anyone over six months old with cancer or an immunosuppressed disorder (including an HIV infection), or those on medications that suppress immunity and lower the body's resistance to infection.
* Any child or adult with chronic heart or lung disease, cystic fibrosis, diabetes, kidney disease, anemia or severe asthma.
* Kids between six months and 18 years old who are on long-term aspirin therapy (for example, those with juvenile rheumatoid arthritis). They may be at risk of developing Reye's syndrome, a life-threatening condition, should they get the flu while taking aspirin.
* Anyone 65 and older.
* Residents of nursing homes and other chronic-care facilities, particularly those with long-term health problems.

Some people need shots because they could give the flu to someone in a high-risk group:

Anyone who works in a hospital, outpatient facility, nursing home or chronic-care facility.

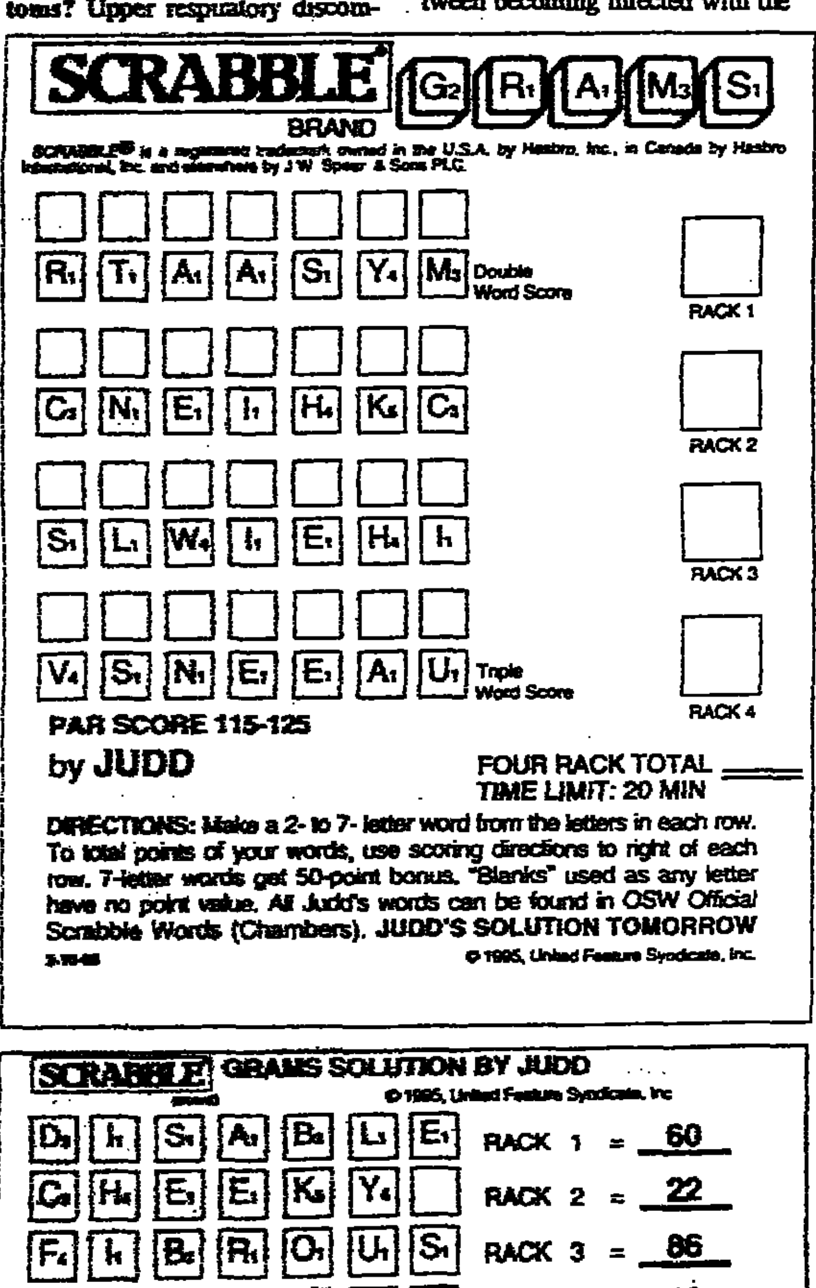
Health-care workers who provide in-home care to high-risk patients.

Any child or adult who lives with a person at high risk for serious complications from the flu.

Do children really need a shot? Children generally don't need to be immunized. But if you decide to immunize them, children 12 and younger should only be given the split-virus vaccine. A modified version of the whole-virus vaccine, it is slightly more expensive, but less likely to produce side effects. Those under nine who have not been previously vaccinated should receive two doses of split-virus vaccine one month apart, the second dose given before December.

Is there anyone who shouldn't be immunized? Since the vaccine is produced from viruses that are grown in eggs, those with a severe allergy to eggs should avoid the vaccine. People already suffering from a fever-causing illness should recover before getting a flu shot or they may not get full protection.

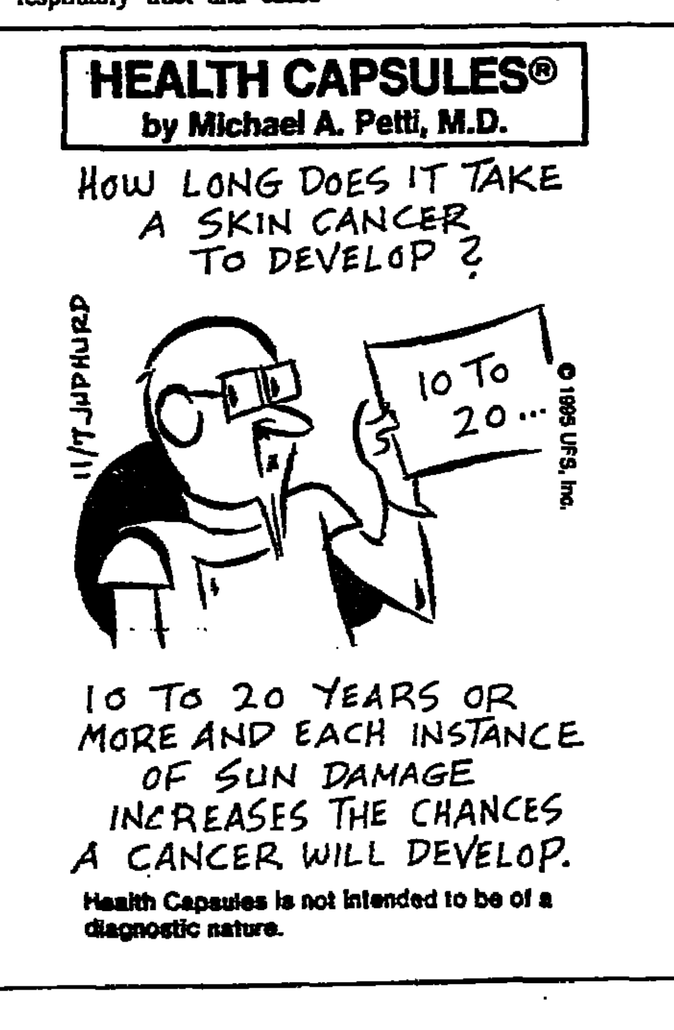
(To be cont'd)



SCRABBLE GRAMS SOLUTION BY JUDD

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D I S A B L E	RACK 1 = 60
C H E E K Y	RACK 2 = 22
F I B R O U S	RACK 3 = 86
L O C K E T	RACK 4 = 12
PAR SCORE 115-125 JUDD'S TOTAL	180





THOUGHT

Abu Abdu-lah [Imam Sadiq (AS) quoted the Messiah (AS) as having said: "He who often becomes upset, his body becomes sick: he whose character is bad, his self becomes torment; he who often talks, often stumbles; he who often lies, he loses his worth; he who quarrels with men, he loses his manliness."

(Bahar, Vol. 14, P. 216)

PRAYER

Noon	12:11
Evening	17:29
Dawn (tomorrow)	05:37
Sunrise (tomorrow)	07:15

TODAY IN HISTORY

1958 - Soviet Marshal Bulganin again proposes summit conference on world problems.

1972 - Bangladesh leader Sheik Mujibur Rahman arrives in London after being released by Pakistan, and he appeals for recognition of his new nation.

1974 - Communist-led insurgents in Cambodia intensify pressure on Phnom Penh with strikes north and south of the capital.

1989 - Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev says Kremlin is besieged by financial problems that are sapping his reforms.

1990 - East German official discloses that 60,000 members of secret police are still on government payroll despite previous month's pledge that organization would be dismantled.

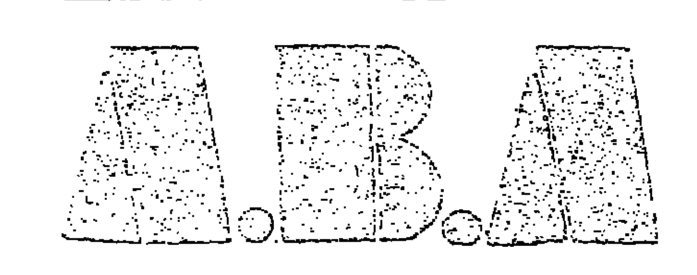
1991 - Lithuanian Prime Minister resigns citing pending changes to the republic's price system.

1992 - President Bush collapses to the floor at a state dinner in Tokyo and the White House says he is suffering from stomach flu.

1993 - The deputy premier of Bosnia is shot to death by Serbian gunmen while Serbian rebel leaders considered an international peace settlement.

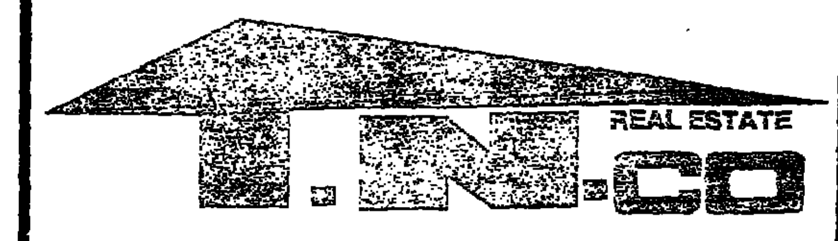
1994 - A stolen taxi packed with explosives blows up in a parking lot underneath a shopping mall in Mexico City and another bomb goes off in Acapulco, a day after rebels were implicated in two bombings near the capital.

1995 - Russia pounds Chechnya with rocket and mortar fire.



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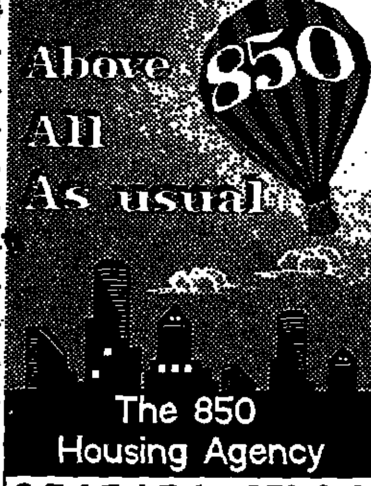
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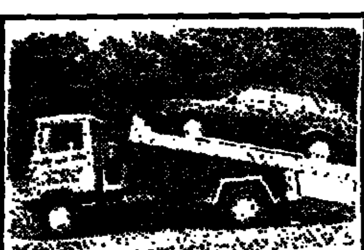
1- Excellent command of English and Farsi (written and spoken).
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3- Knowledge of computer (word & Excel).
4- Minimum 3 years experience in accounting.
5- Strong personality.
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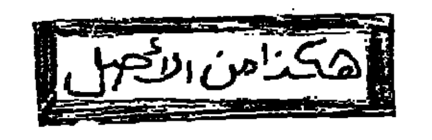


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Call for Papers and Books

Third Razi Festival (April 1997)

"Guide Directions for Attending the Third Razi Festival"

Introduction

Razi Festival is held every year on the occasion of Teacher's Day and on the martyrdom anniversary of Professor Mottahari. This festival aims at strengthening the spirit of innovations and originality in talented persons and promotion of innovative qualities in gifted ones. Razi Festival also aims at appreciating the high ranking professors. In this glorious festival the superb works conducted by Iranians in the field of science and medicine are honored by the high ranking Iranian officials, specialists, innovators and the representatives of the mass media. The third festival invites interested persons in the fields of complied books, research papers and innovative projects to participate.

General Conditions for Participation in the Festival:

The applicants:

1) should have terminated their projects, book or research paper publication before December 21, 1995.
2) should not have previously been a participant at the festival.
3) should fulfill the prerequisites laid by the festival in the various fields.

Particular Conditions for Participation in "Compiled Books Section"

1) The contents of the book should be the result of compiling the scientific texts, analyzing them by the author and lead to the author's deductions.
2) The book has to be published with the circulation of at least one thousand copies.

Particular Conditions for Participation in Research Papers Section (one of the following two conditions is obligatory.)

1) The paper has to be published in one of the local or foreign scientific magazines as an "Original Article". In this case the original source or a copy of it should be sent along with the article.
2) The paper should be completed and approved in one of the universities or research centers as a research project. In this case the paper should be rearranged in form of an article, typed and reduced into an appropriate size and structure and be supplemented with pictures, tables and diagrams. Such articles should be sent after getting approval form the authorized related institute where they were originated.

Notice: Detailed research reports prepared by the commissioners of the research projects are not acceptable for the organizers of the festival.

Particular Conditions for Participation in Innovative Projects Section:

1) The projects should be considered an innovation either at domestic or the international level.
2) The topics of projects should be related to producing a particular substance, manufacturing an instrument or applying a new method (e.g. a new surgery method or an innovatory calculation formula) or proposing a new application for an instrument.
3) All the various stages of the projects should be completed in advance.
4) A report on the project should be printed in one of the scientific magazines or approved by one of the universities or scientific research centers. In any case, the original text or a copy of the typed report must be sent along with related pictures or samples.

How to Fill Out the Festival's Application Form:

1) Provide a copy of the application form.
2) Type in the necessary information and make sure of their accuracy.
3) In the section provided for "Participant's Specifications", please write either the specifications of the author, or that of the first researcher, or the specifications of one of the researchers after reaching agreement with other researcher colleagues.
4) Identifying the field of speciality of the participants is necessary for making judgements. Mark only one of the provided choices and for easing the judgment, please do not choose the choice "etc." if possible.
5) Make sure to write the address and Post Code completely and accurately.

How to Send Application Forms and the Articles:

1) Enclose the filled-out application form and the articles (book, paper, ...) in the same package.
2) Mail the package to the following address: Third Razi Festival Secretariat, Opposite Avesta Park. Research Deputy of Health Ministry Bldg., Azadi Ave. Tehran, Iran. P.O. Box 14155-[illegible]
3) Upon the receipt of packages, within a month the secretariat will inform the applicants wether their article(s) are accepted or rejected for presentation at the festival.
4) Since the deadline for receiving the articles by the secretariat is March 18, 1997, make sure your articles will be received by the secretariat before the allocated date. The Festival Secretariat accepts no responsibility for the articles received after the deadline.

Secretariat of the Third Razi Festival Tel: [illegible] Fax: [illegible]

Research Deputy of Ministry of Health and Medical Education

Date of Receipt: .... Application Form for Participation at the 3rd Razi Festival No.: ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

(Please do not write above this line.)

Fill out this form only by a typewriter and just for one book, paper or innovative project.

1) Type: Compiled book ☐ Research paper ☐ Innovative project ☐

2) Subject Specialty Field:

Clinical Sciences ☐ Pure Sciences ☐ Pharmacology ☐ Dentistry ☐ etc. (please mention).. ......

3) Title:..

4) Year of Publication (or Completion of the Project):..

5) Specifications of the Participant:

Family Name:..First Name:................

Last academic degree: BS ☐ MS ☐ PhD & higher ☐

Not a member of Faculty of Science ☐

A member of Faculty of Science ☐

Scientific Position: Professor ☐ Associate Professor ☐ Assistant Professor ☐ Trainer ☐

Member of the scientific association:....................

Address:..

Post Code:..........................Tel:....................

6) Full names of scientific colleagues:

1)..

2)..

I, the undersigned,........................ have mailed ....copies of my book ☐ paper ☐ .... in order to participate at the Third Razi Festival. In case I will be interested in taking them back, I will refer to the Secretariat of the Festival by July 21, 1997.

Signature

Hook Salmon, Trout Anglers Stockholm's Clean Water

STOCKHOLM — Standing near Sweden's royal palace on a cold wintry night, Franco cast his heavy baited line into the freezing waters that run through the center of Stockholm.

"I've caught around 500 salmon in Stockholm over the past 20 years," says Franco, an Italian who moved to Sweden more than 30 years ago.

"Here's my most recent catch," he said, proudly displaying the one that didn't get away — a four kg (8.82 lb) beauty.

Shortly afterwards, another angler caught a 35 cm (13.7 inch) sea trout which he promptly released.

"It's rather small," says Franco. "Most fishermen release salmon or sea trout that are less than 50 cm (19.7 inches)."

Every night throughout the year, anglers line the banks of the "stream" running through Stockholm's picturesque old town, in reality a body of fresh water called the Strommen which separates the Malaren Lake on one side of the city from the Baltic Sea on the other side.

For most Europeans, it is hard to imagine schools of Atlantic salmon and sea trout swimming through the heart of a European capital.

Marine biologists say that salmon and trout require almost pristine conditions to survive. Their presence in Stockholm — in encouraging numbers — is a clear sign that the city's water is clean and the aquatic habitats beneath the surface healthy.

Every night throughout the year, anglers line the banks of the "stream" running through Stockholm's picturesque old town, in reality a body of fresh water called the Strommen which separates the Malaren Lake on one side of the city from the Baltic Sea on the other side.

"It is a point of pride for Stockholmers that their water is clean enough for Atlantic salmon," says Lennart Nyman, a conservation officer with the Swedish branch of the World Wide Fund for Nature. "It shows that the quality of the water is very good."

Pollution Efforts Introduced in the 50s

An effort to clean the city's waters was launched in the 1950s when industrial and sewage controls were introduced to cut pollution levels.

Residents and tourists alike are allowed to fish free of charge and without permits in Stockholm, making it about the only free activity in this Nordic capital where even "happy hour" prices in bars can quickly empty a wallet.

Feeless fishing is part of a tradition that goes back to 1436, when the City Council granted wealthy burghers the right to fish the crown waters in and around the city.

These rights were given royal sanction in 1636 by Queen Christina and successive monarches. In 1860, the privilege of angling in crown waters was extended to all of Stockholm's inhabitants, including visitors.

Salmon and sea trout, however, were not caught in the city's waters until the 1970s.

"Salmon are not native to the Stockholm Strommen," says Nyman. "There is no place for them to spawn and the system is filled with predators."

Salmon and sea trout were first introduced in Strommen in 1973, when 500 hatchery-reared two-year-old smolt were released by the city's Sports Federation.

Two years later, the experiment proved a success when some returned from the Baltic Sea.

Since then, around 600,000 salmon and sea trout smolt have been released under a program sponsored by the City Council, the National Board of Fisheries and the State Power Board (Vattenfall).

"We release about 25,000 salmon and sea trout smolt each year, and estimate that around 25 percent return," says Kjell Winstrom, a fisheries biologist at Vattenfall. "About 800 sea trout and over 100 salmon were taken in 1996.

"They usually come back in two to three years' time and grow quite quickly. They weigh around 100 grams when they are released and average five kg to 10 kg (11-22 lb) when they come back."

Fish of Record Size

Some grow to be enormous. The record salmon taken from Stockholm's waters, just south of the Parliament, weighed in at 19.4 kg (42.77 lb).

Trophies of that size are tempting bait which lure anglers to the city's old town on long, freezing Nordic nights.

The salmon introduction scheme in Stockholm is part of a larger national program which has seen almost two million smolt released in more than 30 Swedish rivers. Around 90 percent of Sweden's salmon population has been domestically reared.

But the program has not been a complete success.

"The domestically-hatched salmon all over Sweden have been plagued by M-74 disease, a vitamin deficiency passed by mothers to their young. Newly-hatched smolt with the disease don't begin feeding and die," says Dr. Lars Karlssonm, a fisheries biologist with the Swedish Salmon Research Institute.

"We have been unable to detect the source of the disease in the food chain."

"The domestically-hatched salmon all over Sweden have been plagued by M-74 disease, a vitamin deficiency passed by mothers to their young. Newly-hatched smolt with the disease don't begin feeding and die."

Karlsson said the country's offshore commercial salmon catch fell in 1995 to 2,892 tons from 5,600 tons in 1990.

Still, the fishing in Stockholm is better than that found in any other European capital.

Franco, for one, is hooked.

"I come here most nights," he said as he cast his line into the water once more. (Reuter)

Mysterious Murder of Six-Year-Old Girl Fascinates U.S.

BOULDER, Colorado — The mystery of who killed a six-year-old beauty pageant winner has alarmed residents and captivated the U.S. public and media.

Police say they are being tight-lipped because they want to avoid the kind of media circus that surrounded the O.J. Simpson murder case. But the dearth of official information and the lack of an arrest has only fueled speculation.

On the afternoon of the day after Christmas, the body of Jonbenet Ramsey was found. She had been strangled and reportedly sexually assaulted in the basement of her parents' home in an affluent neighborhood of this city outside Denver.

Her father, John Ramsey, said he found the body.

Hours before, Jonbenet's mother, Patsy Ramsey — a former "Miss Virginia" beauty queen — called police to say her daughter had been kidnapped. A ransom note demanded $118,000.

From the start, many doubts have been cast upon the information given by Jonbenet's parents.

The police said they could not confirm a kidnapping occurred. After the couple was interviewed on national television — with Patsy warning there was a killer "on the loose" — police told the public not to be alarmed.

And after the couple flew to Atlanta to be with family members, several Boulder police officers traveled there as well, saying only they wanted to arrange for an interview with the Ramseys upon their return to Colorado.

Meanwhile, the U.S. news media has been fixated on the story, with television repeatedly showing video clips of a precocious Jonbenet, wearing makeup and dressed in a glittering get-up, singing in a Las Vegas-style child talent show.

She was 1995's Little Miss Colorado.

The *Denver Post* reported Saturday that the ransom note was written on a pad of paper found elsewhere in the Ramsey home, adding to suspicions that the couple was somehow involved in the murder.

The Boulder newspaper reported that Jonbenet had been strangled by a cord, gagged with duct tape and sexually assaulted.

As days go by and no one is arrested, people in Boulder and parents all over the country have not hesitated in second- guessing the police and the news media.

One young mother, Michelle Roos, said that "if someone is really out on the loose doing something, they would find more kids out there."

She also wondered why the police — summoned to the home as a result of the ransom note — did not search the house for Jonbenet.

Bill and Kathy Moran said they have been reading local newspapers daily "anxiously awaiting some news" — but not because they fear for their children.

The ongoing saga "reads like a book", explained Bill Moran, who likes mystery books in particular.

Boulder Mayor Leslie Durgin, meanwhile, has defended the police for releasing little information on what was Boulder's only murder case in 1996.

"The police have the responsibility to not only solve a murder, but to get a conviction ... it is not to feed the media news," she said.

And Boulder police chief Tom Koby told the *Denver Post*: "One thing about O.J. (Simpson) and the circus that developed is that people think that's the way it's done. We're trying to show how it should be done." (AFP)

Kampanila

Libceves is situated in the Central Highlands. When you leave Louny, the countryside looks almost idyllic. Isolated hills rise from the plains, church spires soaring above the villages clustered on their slopes. The horizon is dominated by the majestic silhouette of Hazmburk. It is only a few kilometers farther on that the region devastated by mining and industry begins. It is as if it had nothing to do with this part of the countryside.

The chateau in Libceves stands on a small hill on the edge of the village, hidden behind trees. No path leads to it, and searching for the conservationist who we had heard spends every summer rebuilding it, we got lost. We headed up the hill, until we stumbled upon the first wall hidden in the bushes. Not much of it remained. At first sight the chateau of Libceves looks like nothing more than a pile of stones: the roof has long since vanished, and trees have sprung up in rooms with fallen vaulting. Aside from farms in the border region, which disappeared fifty years ago, we had never seen anything like it.

"There's nothing left to rebuild," we said to each other, and started to leave. Just on an off chance, I climbed over a pile of bricks and stepped into a corridor. Somewhere in the distance I could hear voices. I made my way through the ruins of several rooms. In a small tidy courtyard of the chateau about ten people were sitting in the middle of a pile of rubble, pickaxes, shovels and wheelbarrows. "Hello," I said uncertainly. I felt like Alice in Wonderland. It must have been obvious that I could hardly believe my eyes.

... People Will Be Hooked

I describe this scene at such length because I'd like to convey at least some sense of the feeling of incredulity I had. I have never seen such a large building in such a thoroughly devastated state. And I have never known people who operated in such a setting with the feeling that they were doing nothing more than tidying up a messy courtyard.

"Here there will be the main part, where we'd like to stick to an alternative way of living. Without electricity, like it was in the past," said Stanislalv Flesar, pointing to a pile of stones behind me. "And here we'll have the second part, which the village will use. There will be an exhibition here."



"And how old are you — I mean, will you live to see it finished?" we asked bluntly and with a touch of irony. "It just looks like that. It only needs to be cleaned up a bit. When at least something can be seen, when the building no longer looks like a rubbish heap, people will be hooked." Only later did it occur to me how important this comment was.

No Point in Complaining

Ing. arch. Stanislav Flesar, 38, comes from Teplice. After finishing his studies, he worked for some time for a firm planning mining operations, and then for the Regional Historical Buildings and Monuments Board, where he had first-hand experience of the desperate state of historical buildings in the northern Bohemia region. At some point in the mid-eighties, he reached the conclusion that if anything was to change for the better, people had to become personally involved. So he picked out a Baroque church in Libotenice, tucked away on the banks of the Elbe a short distance from the village itself. The belfry stands apart, twenty meters from the body of the church, an arrangement it shares with a number of other churches around Usti and Litomerice. These belfries standing on their own are called companiles. In 1987 Stanislav Flesar, acting as a private individual, rented the church in Libotenice for thirty-seven years at a symbolic annual rent of 10 crowns. It was an act of mercy. He started coming here with his friends, and they covered the roof with strips of linoleum and sheet metal. "We told ourselves that communism wouldn't last forever in this country. We didn't know whether it would stagger on for five years or twenty years, but somehow we had the feeling that we'd last it out.

The church in Libotenice survived. In 1990, Stanislav Flesar became head of the Historical Board in Usti nad Liabem. The state took over the responsibility for repairing the church. But in northern Bohemia there are more

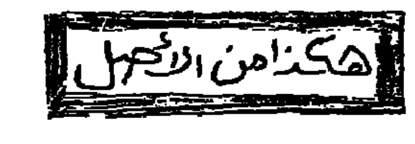


than 1,200 churches. The Catholic Church maintains those it is able to collect money for, but there are far more decaying buildings that deserve to be protected. The principle of personal responsibility, which Flesar and his friends turned to during the communist period, is once again crucial. In 1992 he rented the church in Hostikovice. Within two years, at a cost of about 300,000 crowns, he managed to repair it. Some of the money came from private individuals, some from sponsors, some from the state. Everyone involved in the project as encouraged by its success. In 1993 they founded an association called Kampanila (Campanile). Membership is open to anyone who rents and takes personal responsibility for any kind of protected building, repairs it and promises to look after it. It doesn't matter whether this is a little country chapel or a vast church. It is up to the individual to choose, depending on what he or she feels able to manage. In northern Bohemia, as elsewhere, there is much to choose from.

Kampanila

Besides Slanislav Flesar, the founding members of the association are Michala Neudertova, a teacher at the Jan Evangelista Purkyne University in Ust nad Labem and the underground poet and former editor of the Vono review Ludek Marks. The latter, an employee of the Historical Buildings and Monuments Board, lives in the campanile of the Libotenice church and rides around the local countryside on his Campagnolo bicycle mapping the state of protected buildings. "After several churches, we felt like taking under our protection some non-religious building," says Stanislav Flesar. And so Kampanila decided on the fortified tower in Libceves. Along with it, they took on the small pilgrimage church of St. James. Eventually, the aim is to use it as a seasonal center for art therapy for mentally handicapped children. With its beautiful view, it is an ideal place for painting outdoors. The countryside round about is dreamy and beautiful. "I can never understand why anyone would go to southern Bohemia for their holidays," says Stanislav Flesar. "The countryside there is so banal. The special dynamics you get here — the Elbe, the Central Bohemian Highlands, sandstone cliffs — you won't find anywhere else."

(Courtesy Review of the Czech Republic)



Strategies for Achieving Sustained Improvement in the Quality of Life





Part 3

One of the earliest indices devised was the Physical Quality of Life Index (PQLI). This index was based on three factors: infant mortality rate, life-expectancy at the age of 1 year, and the literacy rate of adults. Each factor was indexed on a scale of 0 to 100 — 0 being the worst performance recorded among the nations of 1950, and 100 the best performance to be expected anywhere by the year 2000. The Overseas Development Council, however, ceased publication of the PQLI in 1990.

The torch was immediately taken up by the UN Development Program, which has published its Human Development Index annually since 1990. In its version for 1994, HDI used life-expectancy at birth as its health component. The educational element was a combination of adult literacy (given a weight of two-thirds) and the mean number of years of schooling received (a weight of one-third). Income was measured by the real, gross domestic product (or GDP) per person, adjusted for local differences in the cost of living. Because excess consumption brings little benefit in terms of welfare, income differences above $5,120 were heavily scaled down.

The HDI has become, in international headlines, a figure for progress, although public interest tends to focus more on relative rank than on absolute score. It has served, nevertheless, to stimulate national debates over priorities and the distribution of resources.

As concern for the environment has mounted, there have been attempts made to draw up an index to measure the ecological aspects of quality of life. The New Economics Foundation in London developed a *Green League of Nations* index for twenty-one countries. This is calculated from eleven environmental indicators that range from gas emissions through threatened species to energy efficiency.

Indices present drawbacks and dangers. Quality of life comprises disparate elements, never to be summed up satisfactorily so as to produce an overall score. They also contain a large measure of subjectivity. The choice of constituent items and the weight awarded to each are very much value-judgments, making the results far less objective than their numerical form makes them appear.

Reforming National Economic Accounts

In most countries there already exists 'government by targets and indicators', but these are overwhelmingly macroeconomic: low inflation, balanced budgets, growth of gross national product (GNP), and so on. It is essential, however, to place the right indicators at the heart of economic policy. Currently GNP and its growth are the touchstone of progress, nationally and internationally. Because it offers a massive summary of economic life, GNP has been mistaken for a comprehensive guide to a nation's welfare. It is often, as a consequence, taken to be the leading expression of quality of life and the prime standard for comparing welfare among nations.

GNP proves to be an inadequate road-map for the quality of life, however, because it does not sum up national welfare and fails to tell us if this welfare is sustainable. Nor do international comparisons reflect the current *relative* quality of life. Only recently has the relative value of income, in terms of purchasing power, been introduced as a more meaningful yardstick in lieu of the traditional measurements comprising GNP.

(To be contd)

Malaysia Sets Up Special Squads to Find Illegal Immigrants

KUALA LUMPUR — Malaysia will set up special squads to lead a campaign against more than one million illegal foreign workers, Deputy Home Minister Megat Junid Megat Ayob said.

The 16 squads, with personnel from the Home Ministry and Immigration Department, will work with local authorities and the military to find illegal immigrants, Megat Junid was reported saying in the *Star* newspaper.

"We will not spare any effort to go after the remaining estimated one million workers," said Megat Junid, warning the authorities would continue rounding them up as long as the detention centers could accommodate them.

The squads would be equipped with four-wheel-drive vehicles, walkie-talkies, detection gear, handcuffs and pistols, Megat Junid said.

The nationwide crackdown is expected to start within two weeks, immigration officials said.

Malaysia deported 1,500 illegal immigrants to Indonesia last Friday to clear detention camps ahead of an intensive search for a million others believed to be in the country.

The authorities also plan to deploy 3,000 security personnel in the crackdown, following the midnight expiry of a six-month amnesty on December 31. The personnel, including 1,000 soldiers, will carry out door-to-door checkes of homes, offices and night markets, sealing off parts of the Malaysia-Thailand border.

Illegal workers will face expulsion, and employers have been threatened with stiff punishments.

Megat Junid said 423,180 foreign workers had registered with the authorities by the December 31 deadline but there are another one million laborers, mainly from Indonesia, Bangladesh, the Philippines, Thailand, Pakistan, India and Burma.

(AFP)

Guatemala Hopes China Relents on UN Mission

GUATEMALA CITY — Foreign Minister Eduardo Stein expressed hope that China would refrain from using its veto to block a UN resolution to send an observer force to monitor a peace agreement with guerrillas.

"We can only hope that the government of China will not exercise its veto and we believe that with the support of friendly countries we can reach an understanding in the coming days that will permit a positive outcome," Stein told reporters.

China has opposed the UN mission because of Guatemala's ties with Taiwan, which Beijing views as a renegade province.

Guatemala signed a peace accord with leftist guerrillas December 29, ending 26 years of civil war, but China protested the presence of Taiwan's foreign minister at the signing of the treaty.

The Security Council expects to discuss soon a U.S.-drafted resolution authorizing the mission of 155 military observers for a three-month period at a cost of some $15 million, diplomats said.

However, UN diplomats noted that China has not explicitly informed its Security Council partners that it would veto the proposal, and hoped that Beijing could be persuaded to abstain when a vote is held on the resolution.

Diplomats said Guatemala would come under continued pressure to make a concession concerning its support of UN membership for Taiwan.

(AFP)

UN Children's Rights Committee Meets in Geneva

GENEVA — A UN committee concerned with children's rights will consider the appointment of an expert to examine the impact of armed conflict on children during a three-week meeting which opened here Monday.

The committee on the rights of the child will also examine reports about the treatment of youngsters from Bulgaria, Ethiopia, Panama, Myanmar, Syria and New Zealand, the UN said.

The UN General Assembly in November recommended the appointment of a special representative for a three-year term to raise awareness about the plight of children, estimated to make up about 45 percent of all civilian war casualties.

Roughly two million children have been killed in armed conflict in the last decade and three times as many have been injured or permanently disabled, according to UNICEF.

The special portfolio would also embrace child refugees, the elimination of trafficking in children and economic exploitation, Ibrahima Fall, the United Nations' under secretary for human rights said during opening remarks.

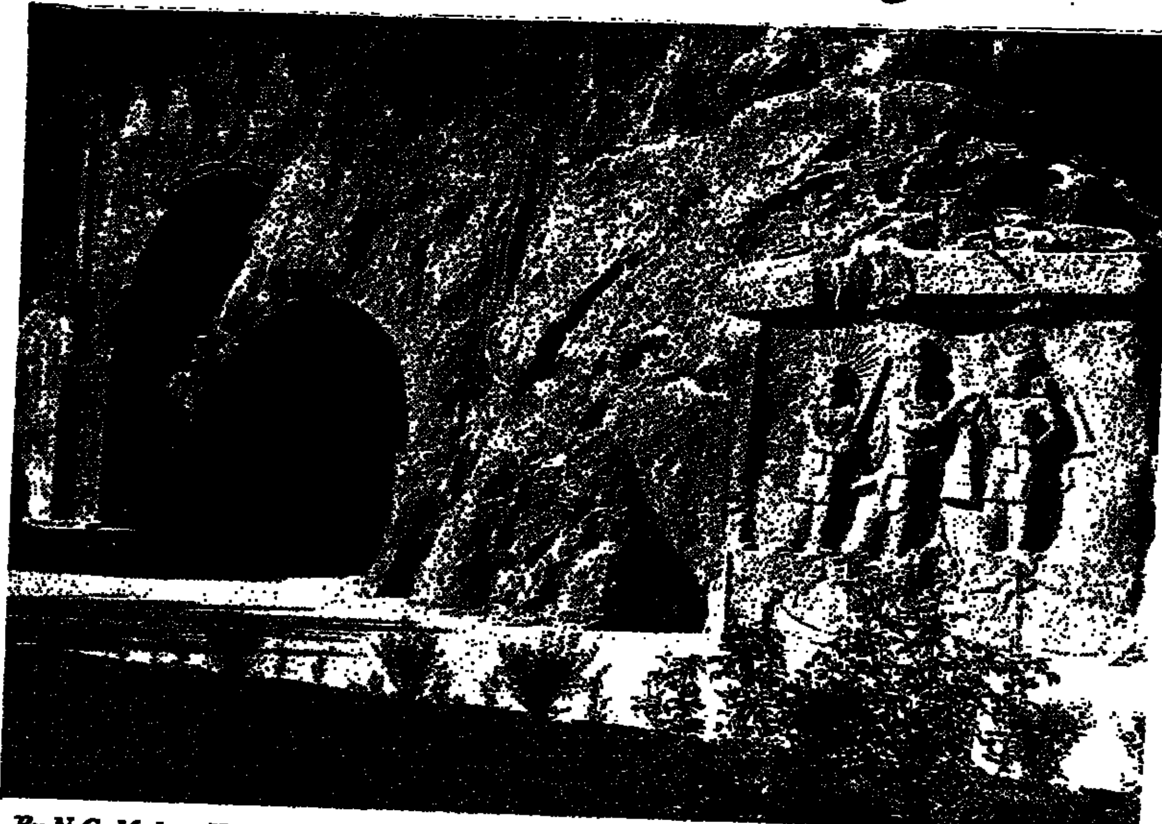
The committee, formed in 1991, is charged with monitoring the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the most complete statement of children's rights ever made and the first giving them a legal international weapon.

The 1990 Convention, adopted by 188 states, makes member countries accountable for their treatment of children.

(AFP)



Pleasant Memories of Iran



By N.C. Mohan Krishna

The Indian-Iranian cultural relationship is nothing new, but one which dates back thousands of years. Recent archaeological discoveries of stones in Iran on Vedas shows ancient links between India and Iran.

Before leaving India for Iran on a company assignment in Bojnourd, Khorassan Province, for a petrochemical project, I went through guides which gave a brief overview of Iranian culture and life. Upon my landing at Mehrabad Airport I was the recipient of Iranian hospitality and kindness. I am proud and happy to say that this hospitality and kindness continued until my departure two-and-a-half years later. On leaving, I had a number of friends with sorrowful faces, to whom I had become attached and felt as if I were one of them.

Initially, language was the barrier to making friends, but gradually we were able to learn each others' languages. When I started to speak in Farsi everyone felt that I had come closer to them. In my work I was able to talk to the workers fluently, making it easier to work as a team.

I later discovered that I had made far more Iranian friends than my fellow Indians in Iran.

Another name for Iranians is 'hospitality'. A meeting begins with *'Salaam, Hale Shoma Khoobe?*" I think one cannot find such hospitality anywhere else in the world. Wherever one goes; to a shop or a taxi driver, one is greeted in such a way.

I was able to find many Farsi words which resembled Indian:

Aab (water) - *Aab* (in Sanskrit, Hindi)

Gooni (gunny bag) - *Goni* (in Tamil)

Meekh (nail) - *Mekh (in Telugu)*

Darya (sea) - *Dariya (Hindi, Urdu)*

Cakes and pastry were one of my favorite items and hot *'noon'* (bread), *barbari* or *sangak*, tempt one to eat it straight out of the hearth. I appreciate the Iranian government for subsidizing bread which is a staple in man's diet.

In the beginning, being a vegetarian I felt it would be very difficult for me to maintain my diet in Iran, as most Iranians are non-vegetarians. But I was surprised to get fantastic rice and fresh vegetables, making me feel at home.

Musical instruments such as the *santoor*, *taar*, and *setar* were melodious; hearing their songs on television was very sweet. Every night between 7 and 8 p.m. I stayed close to the television set in order to listen to them.

Iran has many interesting places such as Shiraz, Isfahan, or the Ali-Sadr Cave in Hamadan where one can row in water under a huge mountain. It is one of the rarest experiences one can have. The Iranian government should advertise this most unique site so that people all over the world would know about it.

One cannot miss Persepolis and Siyosepol which are so well preserved. Persepolis dates back more than 2,500 years, and I congratulate the Cultural Heritage Organization for preserving this site so well. The Museum of Royal Jewels and the Armenian Church in Isfahan — which possesses rare paintings of Jesus, the Tiny Bible, Bible on a hair — are some places in Iran one should not miss.

Iran possesses such a vast amount of treasures that it would take many pages to praise them.

The Iranian New Year, *'Norooz'*, falls on the same day and time as the Indian New Year (for Andrites, Kannadigas and Maharashtrians).

Iranians set a table of 'Haftsin' (the Seven Ss), pray and celebrate with their families. In India, too, this new year is celebrated with edibles which are sweet, sour, bitter, and hot items which correspond to the 'S' in Farsi.

Another surprise was the tidiness in public places. People know their responsibilities and maintain discipline in such areas. All gardens are kept clean and every town has one. A picnic is a common affair to Iranians on holidays. This shows how much they like fresh air and natural living. I think this is one of the reasons why Iran has less air pollution than other countries.

Who says that the freedom of Iranian women is restricted? I observed that Iranian women are more talented, well-educated and occupy higher positions than many other countries; one can see women at any kind of work, and they are very courageous.

Iran is a very peace-loving country; the young generation is not spoiled as in other countries where morality has been abandoned to satellite television.

Iran is now attempting to stand on its own strength. I pray to God to shower His choicest blessings on Iran so that Iranians will grow and become a model country.

My memories of Iran will always be green; I will carry these sweet memories for the rest of my life.

Daily Food for Thought

On Adversity

The greatest works of admiration,
And all the fair examples of renown,
Out of distress and misery are grown.

SAMUEL DANIEL,
Earl of Southampton

The Poet Ghalandar Commemorated in Pakistan

Tehran Times Service

TEHRAN — The 745th birth anniversary of the Indian poet Shahbaz Ghalandar, who composed his works in Farsi, was commemorated in Sahun Sharif, Pakistan.

According to a fax received by the daily, the commemoration ceremony held by the cultural attache of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Pakistan, included a book fair, handicrafts, photo exhibition, exhibition of over one hundred copy versions of the Holy Qoran, and film screening.

Also during the ceremony some political, historical, religious, philosophy, and literary books along with cassettes on Iranian traditional songs were offered to the buyers.

The participants from different srtata of people and sects along with Muslim population of Pakistan, marched to the poet's tomb. It was highly welcome.

A Horror Meister in Horn-Rimmed Glasses

NEW YORK — There are no knives on the table. No blood on the walls. No bodies on the floor. Just a man dressed in black - save for charcoal checks in his sports jacket - sitting in the lobby of a Manhattan Hotel, talking on a cellular phone and sipping cappuccino.

This is horror Meister Wes Craven? The man who gave cinematic birth to steel-fingered Freddy Krueger in *"A Nightmare on Elm Street,"* the 1984 horror classic that single-handedly scared the daylights out of a generation of teenagers?

"As soon as people meet you, they say they didn't expect you to look like that," says the filmmaker, his dark hair flecked with gray, his beard closely trimmed, a pair of horn-rimmed glasses dangling from his neck.

"After they see that you're a normal person, they'll say, 'you must have really weird dreams, or had a really bad childhood.'" Craven says with a mixture of amusement and resignation.

"They're always trying to distance themselves." They may run the other way after seeing his latest film, *"scream,"* starring Courteney Cox and Drew Barrymore.

In this smart, witty homage to the genre, students at a suburban California high school are being killed in the same gruesome fashion of the victims in the slasher films they know by heart.

If it sounds like the script of every other horror movie to come and go at the local movie theater, it's not. By turns terrifying and funny, *"Scream"* - written by newcomer David Williamson - is as taut as a thriller, intelligent without being self-congratulatory, and generous in its references to Craven's competitors in Gore.

"What do you think, you're in a wes carpenter movie?" asks one teen, confusing Craven with John Carpenter, who directed the original *"Halloween."* Craven, 57, who looks every bit the college humanities professor and high school teacher he was before going into movies, is also generous in crediting Williamson's first produced screenplay.

"It's entertaining, it's fun, it's not trying to make a heavy statement," he said. "It's got enough substance to it to make it interesting if you want to apply thought to it. And it's also a great ride."

Craven knows about taking his audience on a ride. After earning the praise of hard-core horror fans with *"The Hills Have Eyes"* and *"Last House on the Left"* in the 1970s, Craven wrote and directed the original *"Nightmare"* for $1.2 million. It sold $26 million worth of tickets.

Freddy sliced and diced his way through five sequels, but Craven had bowed out after the original. He went on to direct a string of films, mostly variations of terror, such as *"The Serpent and the Rainbow," "Shocker," "Swamp Thing"* and *"New Nightmare,"* or odd hybrids, like last year's disappointing collaboration with Eddie Murphy, *"Vampire in Brooklyn."*

He's also done the occasional TV movies, including several popular episodes of the *"Twilight Zone"* in the 1980s.

Yet Craven had to be coaxed into the director's chair for *"scream."* He had been working on a remake of the 1963 horror classic *"The haunting"* when dimension films, which released *"scream,"* came knocking.

"I had just been making a real effort to reach a broader audience, a more adult audience," he said. Craven also saw a chance to delve into the world of today's high-tech, online teens, exploring what he calls the "phenomena of kids becoming so absorbed in the genre that it becomes part of their vernacular, in a way, their way of perceiving reality and then having it enter their dreams."

"It's one thing to be amused by things that are bizarre and strange in your entertainment, but if that becomes part of your life, you find out the truth is quite different - and much more terrifying."

Craven may be going over some old territory, but he's in a brand-new car with an assortment of fresh-faced passengers.

First is the heroine, played by 23-year-old Neve Campbell, of TV's *"Party of Five"* who starred as a modern-day witch in last year's hit *"The Craft."* Next is Cox, who turns her *"Friends"* persona inside-out as a tough tabloid TV reporter whose lust for the story matches the killer's appetite for blood.

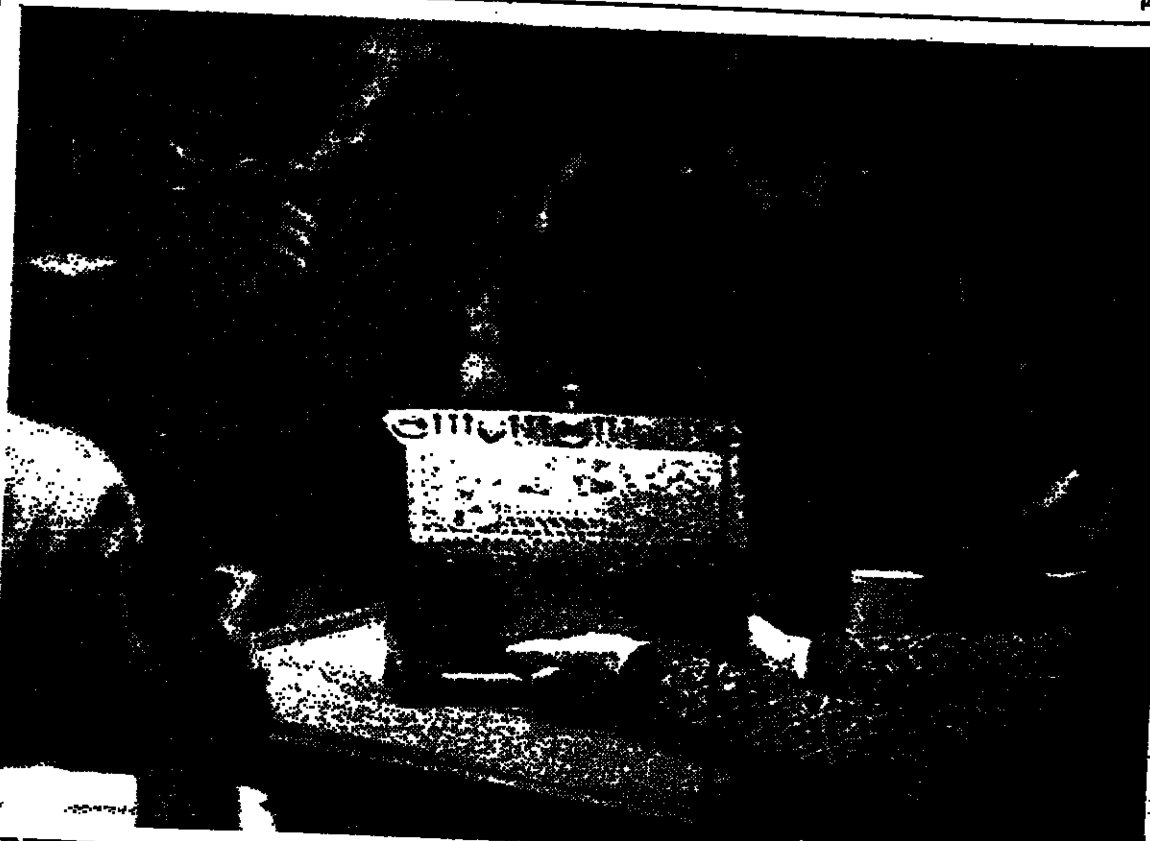
They're joined by David Arquette (*"Wild Bill"*) as a befuddled cop beguiled by Cox, and Skeet Ulrich (*"The Craft"*) as the boyfriend who's pressuring the heroine into going all the way, even as the bodies mount.

There's also a charming cameo by Henry Winkler as the school principal disgusted by the fonzy-like shenanigans of his students, and a one-line walk-on by Linda Blair (*"The Exorcist"*) as an insensitive TV reporter.

It's Barrymore, though, who puts the audience right on the edge of their seat in the film's razor-sharp opening scene. She gets a phone call - on the cellular, of course, so she can run around, lock doors and peer through windows - as she's cooking popcorn before watching a scary movie.

The caller quickly draws her into playing a game of horror movie trivia that quickly turns sinister. The wrong answer can lead to ... It's a dangerous, unsettling scene, one that Craven says gets the audience wondering right away if the director isn't as unhinged as the killer.

(AP)



UNITED KINGDOM (Jan. 3): The 12th-century Becket Chasse is gently placed into its show-case at Christie's auction rooms by an expert of the Victoria and Albert Museum, where it will be the center-piece of an exhibition "Treasures for Every-one." The chasse was saved from exportation following a vigorous campaign led by the National Art Collection Fund, which raised a sum of 4.18 million pounds ($7.08 million). The chasse is believed to have contained a relic of St. Thomas a'Becket and the Limoges enameling illustrates the story of Becket's martyrdom at the alter of Canterbury Cathedral.

(AFP PHOTO)

